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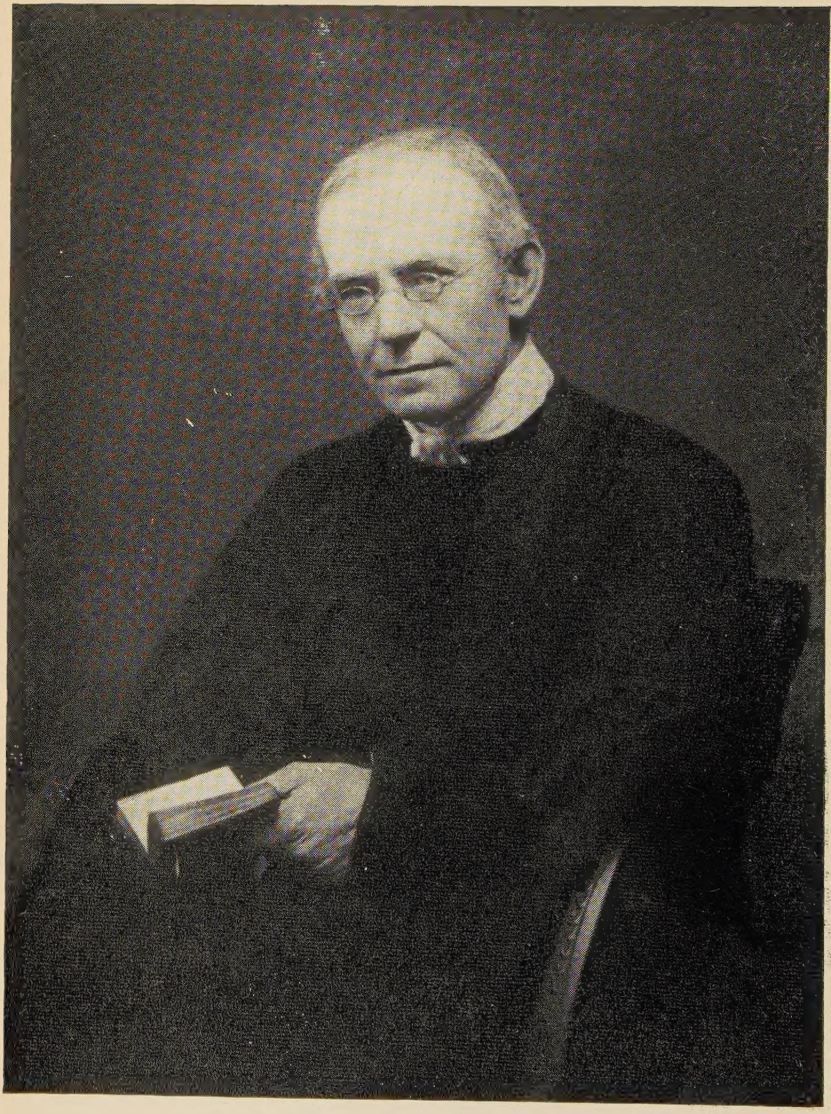
Look to the Glory

A Richard Meux Benson Anthology



Look to the Glory

An anthology
taken from the writings
and from notes made at retreats

of

The Reverend Richard Meux Benson

Father Founder and first Superior
of the
Society of Saint John the Evangelist
Cowley St John, Oxford, England

compiled by
the Reverend Granville Mercer Williams
of the same Society

S.S.J.E. Centenary Year
1866 — 1966

The Society of Saint John the Evangelist
Bracebridge, Ontario, Canada

Man's curiosity searches past and future
And clings to that dimension. But to apprehend
The point of intersection of the timeless
With time, is an occupation for the saint—
No occupation either, but something given
And taken, in a lifetime's death in love,
Ardour and selflessness and self-surrender.

T. S. Eliot
Four Quartets: The Dry Salvages

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Foreword

WRITING in 1915, shortly after Father Benson's death, the late Bishop Hall of Vermont referred to him as 'one of the greatest spiritual forces in the English Church during the latter half of the nineteenth century.' Father Benson's influence on the Religious communities which were coming into being in the Anglican Communion during that period was especially marked. Their various Rules of Life frequently include much of his own spiritual teachings, not seldom quoting from him verbally. His retreat addresses and published meditations were a source of inspiration not only to priests and Religious, but also to many laypeople as well. But while his name is still greatly venerated amongst us, it is doubtful whether his writings are widely read nowadays, even by those interested in the study of Christian spirituality. The reason for this is not far to seek. The modern reader simply does not possess the patience to work through the frequently long and involved development by which Father Benson is accustomed to guide his hearers or readers to the final setting-forth of a spiritual truth. So his teachings are not to-day well known, and this is surely a pity. For Father Benson's spiritual teaching, based as it is primarily on Holy Scripture and on the Fathers of the Church, is very much in line with present-day emphases. His strong 'theocentricity,'—his deep assurance of the absolute primacy of God; his

insistence on the reality of our own sanctification through the power of God's Holy Spirit, dwelling in and working in us; his call to us to look through and beyond the cross of Christ to the abiding glory of the ascended Jesus at the right hand of the Father; his emphasis on the Church as Christ's mystical Body; his grasp of the meaning and reality of the communion of saints; are all greatly needed in our present-day Christianity.

Father Benson has sometimes been faulted for what has seemed to some an undue emphasis on the necessity of asceticism in the Christian life. He does indeed insist strongly on the need of 'real detachment from the world,' he proclaims the need of a real 'dying' to the fallen world in which we live. But, after all, such teaching is undoubtedly Scriptural, being found both in the Pauline and Johannine writings, and occurring frequently in words attributed to our Lord himself. 'Detachment' and 'death' for Father Benson, as for all the authentic teachers of Christian spirituality, are never ends in themselves. They are instead the indispensable means by which alone we may draw near to God, and possess the true eternal life and the true riches to be found only in Christ Jesus. 'Dying, behold, we live; ... having nothing, yet possessing all things' *(2 Cor. 6:9,10)*. And always the central theme of Father Benson's teaching is the surpassing wonder of the glory of the ascended Christ, a glory which we in turn are called to share.

This little book is an attempt to set forth some of Father Benson's spiritual teachings within a compass which, we trust, may prove attractive to the modern reader. The excerpts cover the period from 1868 to 1901. The numbers following the several selections indicate the sources from which they are taken, a list of which is printed at the end of the book. If the extracts given here encourage any readers to consult the larger published works of Father Benson, we doubt not that they will be richly rewarded.

In the attempt to produce this volume, I have been greatly aided by the help and encouragement given me by the Reverend Father Pulley, S.S.J.E.; by the generous kindness of Miss Maisie Spens, of Chelmsford, Essex, who put her valuable note-books on Father Benson at my disposal; and by most useful suggestions and criticisms contributed by Miss Ruth M. Gordon, of Cambridge, Massachusetts. To them, and other kind friends, I am most grateful.

Granville Mercer Williams, S.S.J.E.

Cambridge, Massachusetts, Whitsuntide, 1965.

LOOK up to our Lord Jesus in the glory of the Father, although you see him not with the outward eye. Remember that he sees you, and rest in the security of his love.

If you persevere in looking up to Jesus, he will not fail to give you all you need.

—*from the* ***S.S.J.E. Rule of Life.***

1. God is Love

'GOD is love' *(1 John 4:8)*. We must always bear that in mind; he is the personal manifestation of love. There is no love but what comes from him, no fellowship without him, no fellowship except in the reciprocity of his love. Think of God the Father as a loving Person, rejoicing in the love of his children, and welcoming all that we can do for him with a welcome far beyond what we can conceive. The smallest things gain significance from his welcome, and those hardest to do lose their difficulty while we recognize the intensity of that love which welcomes us. We do not come to God merely for what we can get from him, but to give ourselves to him,—for it is in the welcome of our gift that we find our satisfaction.

The Christian religion beholds God in the fulness of love creating all things; not by mistake, but by the Word of the eternal wisdom. Love, wisdom, power, created all things not because God needed them, but because he desired to show forth in men, as far as they should be capable of approaching him, his goodness and love. The discipline of earthly sorrow, the pains of earthly existence, the difficulties through which we have to pass, are all intended by almighty God to be the means by which we are to learn his goodness; to rejoice while here, and to find perfect joy when we come to know as we are known.[42]

'God is love' *(1 John 4:8)*. God is not merely the power from whence all springs; the wisdom by which all is governed; God is the love by which all are gladdened. God is the love which fills with a new life all creation; and to know his love is to live; and not to know his love is to be dead. We are called to know him in the fulness of a new life, for we hear his Word, and we are moved by his Spirit, and we are gathered unto the participation of that love by being gathered into the Body of his Son.[30]

The love of God is given in all the fulness of its truth. It is given to each one of his sons, to each one who approaches him in his only-begotten Son. The whole Being, the whole joy, the whole love of God pours itself into the Being of the only-begotten; and in him pours itself forth to us, the members of the only-begotten, if we will but rise and assert our blessed inheritance as the members of Christ, the Son of God.[34]

2. The Mystery of the Holy Trinity

WE must accept the truth of the Father and the Son as one in the unity of the Holy Ghost, because he proceeds from both, and is that eternal love which is the nature of both. God is love. Each Person of the blessed Trinity is love. The Father is originating love. The Son is begotten love. The Holy Ghost is uniting love. 'The Father loveth the

Son, and hath given all things into his hand' *(John 3:35)*. Not only all created things hath the Father given to the Son, but the fulness of his own Being,—the fulness of the Holy Ghost. The Father does not love the Son as we love another person; his act of love is the gift of his whole Being. He gives to the Son all that he is; there is nothing that he holds back. And as the whole Being of the Father comes forth to the Son, so the Son does not receive, as it were, a personal acquisition, but with the fulness of truth he loves as he is loved; and all that he receives he returns to the Father. He gives in the fulness of love; and it is the Holy Ghost in whom this love finds final expression. The Holy Ghost is that love which comes from the Father to the Son, and returns from the Son to the Father, without any change of nature, without any difference of degree, or of form, or of grace, in that transmission.

The love of God is continual action. Love must be between two. If the Father could be alone, his love would be misery. The Holy Ghost is that eternal joy which is the love of the Father and the Son, abiding in undivided co-equal life.[36]

3. God's Purpose in our Creation

CONSIDER the eternity of the love of God towards thine own self. The love wherewith he loves us now is the very same wherewith he loved us

before we had any being. His love is changeless in its perfect consciousness. His love is changeless in its perfect power. His love is changeless in its perfect welcome. Yea, from all eternity he rejoiced in the thought of our existence; that existence which he would in due time be pleased to give to us.

We came forth from the eternity of the divine purpose; and we find ourselves amidst the uncertainties of this lower world. Thou camest forth into this lower life. Hast thou forfeited anything by thus coming forth from God, and finding thyself in a human consciousness amid the accidental changes of the lower world? Well might we think so! It might seem to us that in passing forth from the will of the divine purpose to the actuality of a life separate from him, we must be unspeakably the losers. But no,—for we cannot forfeit that love which gave us being. That love is a changeless love.

God has created us in order that we may know him, and live for him; and if we will be true to him, his love shall never be withdrawn. No creature round about can ever separate us from that eternal, changeless love. But God purposed to create us in order that we, amid the clouds of the created atmosphere, might nevertheless look back to him continually; never lose sight of him; rest in his power. He requires that we shall look to him. Otherwise there is no reciprocity of love. He created us to gaze; he created us to love; he created us to act;—and in every gazing, every affection, every action,—he

himself would be the end to which our whole being should be directed.[30]

Let us think as we look round upon the universe that 'this is the will of God, even your sanctification' *(1 Thess. 4:3)*. This will of God then, the eternal predestination of the Father, the object of joyous contemplation to the Redeemer in his Passion,—this will of God must be constantly before our minds. We must have this will of God as a personal law of life, to be our stay and our strength. We must learn the joyousness of having this will of God continually with us.[31]

Oh what it is to live by his indwelling! Oh what it is to look forward to dwelling forever within his glory! To behold him as he is, to be like him, to shine with his own likeness! All the events of the world are tending to the glory of the Word of God. Do we live in accordance with that fulness of love wherewith the Father loveth him, making us rejoice in having been created in order that through us Jesus may be glorified?[28]

The Word of our creation is like a germ or seed containing within itself capacities of development; and each individual can be developed only in the line of that original purpose. As each individual soul is a separate creation of God, so each individual soul has some special purpose of God. No individual can possibly accomplish the purpose of another.

God does not create us so that we shall fail. If we fail, it is because we have failed to work along with God. We may be quite certain that there is not one soul created in the world that has not opportunities of carrying out the purpose of the divine Word in its creation.[28]

That voice of God calls thee onward, and as that voice calls thee onward, it will prepare the way before thee. God who calls thee near shall give thee power to advance. He will remove every obstacle, and supply every need that shall be wanting on the way. Thou must look for difficulty; more difficulty as thou advancest. Thou canst have no idea at the beginning what the divine assistance is to accomplish in thee; leading thee onward to what is contradictory to much in thy nature. Fear not any difficulties, but give thyself to the call of God. One thing only must thou fear,—that is, the remaining what thou art. O look to be transformed according to the fulness of the divine predestination.[28]

4. The Incarnation — Bethlehem

GO to the manger of Bethlehem, behold the child Jesus and worship him! This child in all outward respects was like to any other child. There are no strange phenomena of supernatural or unnatural being to make him different from others. He is in very truth a child as other children are. Men may

invent legends for the child Jesus; but the childhood of Jesus is the childhood of ordinary silence,—a mysterious silence enshrining the Word of God.

How truly he took upon himself the law of human nature! He came not to do anything that was unnatural, or contrary to the nature which he assumed. He came to raise that nature to its highest perfection. We are very apt to think, if God works in grace, he ought, somehow or other, to set aside the workings of nature. But in truth, the highest works of grace are not a setting aside of the works of nature, but they are the filling up of the work of nature with a higher order of power than belongs to itself,—not removing it from the natural law of action, but associating it with a higher law of action.

He is the Word of God who lies thus silent in the manger. Oh, as we come near to this child, do we not desire that he should speak to us,—and yet what do we desire that he should say? What can he say more than simply this,—'I am'? Oh, all that we really want him to say is to make us know that this is he, himself. The heart that knows that this is the Word of God can indeed fall down before that child to pour itself forth in loving worship, and find itself altogether satisfied.

Yes,—we need not that he should speak many words; he who is the Word, and whose very Being is that one word,—love. We need not that he should say more.

God speaks to us, to our hearts, through this

form,—this silent form of infancy. He speaks to our heart, he develops our love,—and the power of love is exhaustless. The power of love is penetrating, the power of love is enduring. The power of love is mutually communicative. And so he develops faith which worketh by love *(Gal. 5:6)*, while we gaze upon the form of his weakness.

This little child is at once the Lord of creation, and of my own heart. He is my Lord in all the power of his majesty. He is my Lord in all the love of his weakness, he is my Lord by all the demands of his sovereignty, he is my Lord by all the tenderness of his vocation. Oh, let us feel then,—and seek to feel more and more,—the closeness of that bond of entire subjection by which we must be held captive by the child Jesus. The more I lose of other things; yes, the more I lose myself, the more I shall know of him. This Lord is the light of my life, the secret of all power.[34]

The birth of Jesus teaches us the very opposite of that which man is apt to contemplate as the ideal of perfection. Civilization is tending towards the entire conquest of the world around, while man himself remains unchanged. The new-born Saviour teaches us that the evils of the world around do not interfere with the glory of the life within. Man in his highest perfection will be true to God in spite of all surroundings of difficulty. It is these very surroundings which serve to make the truth of his obedience

manifest; and thus they become no longer the impediments, but the very means of his glorification. Jesus comes to raise us along with himself above our own selves.[3]

5. Christ's Victory and Ours

WHEN the Son of God took upon himself our nature, he 'emptied himself, and took upon him the form of a servant' *(Cf. Phil. 2:7)*, so as, for a time, no longer to act with the divine omnipotence which yet belonged to him. Such action would have destroyed all human relationship between himself and the world around him. He acted, not in the divinity of his personal character, but in the truth of his assumed humanity. He acted, therefore, as one subject to the operations of the Holy Ghost; not as the Lord from whom the Holy Ghost proceeded. Hence he, as Christ, is a true pattern for us as Christians; for in the strength of the Holy Ghost we are to act. Consequently, he 'glorified not himself to be made an high priest' *(Heb. 5:5)*. He waited for the appointed mission, the ministerial unction at his baptism. Then he went forth to do God's will as the Elect in whom God delighted *(Is. 42:1)*. The Spirit of theLord resting upon him was the strength of all his ministerial and mediatorial powers.[11]

Every moment of our Lord's life on earth was a

sign, both in the deep, out of which he spoke as man; and in the height above, where he lives as God *(Cf. Is. 7:11)*. Each act comprised within itself countless acts of glory beyond enumeration, to live on to ages yet unborn. All his acts were the infinite development of a law. To know Jesus in one act truly, is to know all his acts. No act of Jesus can be told save in some small feature; for in itself, it involves the whole relation of God towards the creature. It is an act of the incarnate Word. Also each act of Jesus spreads in its consequences throughout all creation.[1]

The sonship of Christ was the altar, consecrating every act of his human existence from the first moment of his conception in the womb. Every moment of his life had its infinite and permanent value by reason of his divine sonship. Every moment of his life received its divine benediction from the Father, to whose love every act of his human mind gave loving response. He had no thought in life but to do the Father's will.[43]

Christ's presentation of himself to the Father in the eucharistic oblation is the consummation of all his work. In that oblation he anticipated the sacrifice on Calvary. He has now presented himself to the Father as the perfect oblation. The sacrifice on Calvary was not a distinct event which happened a few hours afterwards. It was an event contained

righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother' *(1 John 3:10)*. We cannot take the love of God by any selfish feeling into our own hearts. By that love we are gathered into the Being of God; but in that love we must love all who are gathered along with us there. But then this love which we have one towards another is a love which circulates through the Heart of Jesus. It is not a love, so to speak, which passes straight from one to the other, but the love which binds us one to another has its point of union and origin in the central Being from whence our love springs, and into which it returns. We love one another through and in Jesus Christ because we members of Jesus Christ, and because we see one another in Jesus Christ. Each one of the faithful is seen shining within the Heart of Jesus, and as we look there we cannot fail to love. Oh we must learn then to look into that all-embracing Heart, and there attain to love one another. We cannot know the love of Jesus unless we do know that love whereby he redeemed mankind. We cannot know the love of Jesus unless we do know that love whereby he sanctifies his elect. We cannot know the love of Jesus unless we do enter into his mighty purpose. To have our portion in that love implies the full recognition of all who are called to share in the same. Meditate then upon the necessity of loving one another, inasmuch as all are gathered into the same Sacred Heart, which is the fountain of love.[30]

9. The Heart of Jesus

WE must go forth into the world with a heart which imitates the Heart of Jesus. It is for us to seek to have that Heart really communicated to us; it is for us to ask him to take our hearts away and give us his,—that Heart which he yearns to find reproduced.[24]

The Heart of Jesus is the formative principle of the Body of Christ. It is not merely a heart which sympathizes with us from without, but from within, so that our heart may find itself cheered in the knowledge of his fellowship; our own heart, our own longings passed away, because our own self is lost in the Body of Christ. We can no longer be a law unto our own selves, for we have Christ as the law of our being. To act for our own selves, to act according to the impulses of our own heart, is to allow a separation from him, which is indeed an outrage against that spiritual nature into which we have been gathered.[30]

'Ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin' *(1 John 3:5)*. He was manifested to perfect us according to this law; not merely to take away the sin in which we were born, not merely to take away sins which we could not help committing however long we lived and however much we strove upon the earth; but he came to take

away the *habit* of sin, the tendencies to sin, to perfect us in the law of holiness, so that growing in holiness here upon earth, our life might find its true perfection in the world which is to come. Yes, Christ was manifested to take away our sin; to take away not merely the consequences of sin from around about us, but to take away the *power* of sin from within. He was manifested to be to us, not merely the pattern of holiness, not merely the victim for our sin; but to be the germ of holiness, and the parent of holiness, and the abiding power of holiness, and the ever-increasing glory of holiness; so that our life in him should be an ever-growing life.[30]

There is no sin to those living in the Heart of Jesus. 'In him is no sin' *(1 John 3:5)*. The power of God fills that holy enclosure, the love of God quickens all that are therein, the power of God sustains us in every way.[30]

Dwell in the Heart of Jesus. Read the mysteries of love which can only be found in that sacred enclosure; as thou goest on thy way let this be the power of all thy actions, so will he make thee to triumph.[33]

The Religious is separated from all in order that he may be identified with all. He is separated from all, but he is gathered into the Heart of Jesus Christ which encloses all. Living in the Heart of Jesus,

he must find all worldly associations transfigured, glorified.[23]

10. Christ's Mission to All Mankind

GOD wrought all things by his Son. The Father created all things by his Word; and now he would accomplish a work greater than that of Creation. It was a great act to call out of infinite nothingness, finite being; it is a greater act to call finite being into infinite glory. God spoke, and the void of nothing was filled with created existence. God speaks, and the creature mounts to the throne of God. All is by the operation of the Word. No other power could accomplish the Father's will. So God sent his Son to take upon himself created nature, that the Word being made flesh might raise created nature to the fellowship of the divine glory.

And how was man to be elevated? Was it enough that one Man should be taken into the sanctity of God in order that others might live in the halo of that glory which belonged to him? No, if God was to speak in man, it must be by taking man after man into union with himself. He must speak not only in man's nature, but in men. He must come and be the Head of the one Body, filling all with one voice, and quickening all with one Spirit.[34]

The Incarnation is the manifestation of the love of God, not merely in the person of the Child of

Bethlehem, but in the persons of all whom Christ attaches to himself. We are each of us incarnations of divine love, since we are members of Christ. The love of God shines forth in us to all mankind, and our life is but the perpetuation of that Love which leaped down from heaven to effect our redemption. To live with the life of Christ, to live with the love of Christ; this is a necessity if we are indeed to be his true people, if we are indeed to know the blessedness of his redemption. We must live now in the power of divine love.[30]

11. Our Nothingness Before God

THE more we are brought into the living presence of the divine greatness, the more we must learn our nothingness. As long as anything separates us from God, we feel ourselves to be somewhat. Self disappears as God is increasingly revealed. Self shall be lost when God shall be known as all in all.[12]

It is a token that God's work is indeed begun when we come to the knowledge of our own nothingness. Only divine light can show this to us. We can only know our own nothingness by having some knowledge of that which is real and substantial.

It is the gift of God if we have but the least glimpse of our own nothingness. Let us take for our encouragement the very fact that we see this nothingness. If we do see it, we can do so only by

the revelation of God. God makes this revelation of thyself that thou mayest cast the thought of self away as unsatisfying. He reveals to thee the purposes of his own love, in order that thou mayest choose him as thy only satisfaction.[28]

The faithful that have served God in the consciousness of their nothingness shall go to God; and their works shall follow them *(Rev. 14:13)*. They are glorified in God, and God is glorified in them. There has been nothing in them to hinder the glory of God. They have given themselves up to nothingness that the glory of God might work in them, shine out in them, and acccomplish in them work beyond all natural powers; that God might be glorified in them through Jesus Christ.[28]

Our nothingness does not leave us in a blank negation of all interests. We do not pass through nothingness to be absorbed in a nirvana; but we pass through nothingness to be taken into the substantive fellowship of the love of God. We are taken into God, and having nothing of ourselves we love God with the very love of God. And the glory of God becomes ours.[35]

The greatest of saints who has passed from this world abiding in the loving memory of future ages, must nevertheless pass as nothingness into the Being of God, for whatever there was in him of sanctity was not himself nor of himself. It was simply the

glory of God shining out through him for a little while, so as to be the glory whereinto he should be welcomed eternally. Growth in holiness is the growing consciousness of truth, whereby, in the words of one of the greatest saints, we say,—I am nothing. 'I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me' *(Gal. 2:20)*.

To learn this lesson of nothingness needs a very manifold discipline of the soul. And we can only learn this lesson thoroughly by having one thing after another taken away from us. Oh if we can indeed remain with hearts fixed upon God while all these successive declarations of earth's failure come to us, then indeed we shall be able to find the fulness of God's love.[35]

12. Temptations

TEMPTATIONS do not make a man evil, but they show what he is. Temptations are the occasions by which also the power of God may be shown in those who will live in his power. And as they live in his power, they are taken up into the glory of his holiness. In the world we are then in the midst of continual temptations, and these temptations are the very means by which our spiritual life is perfected.

And we pray, 'Lead us not into temptation.' This prayer is especially a prayer for the guidance of the Holy Ghost, that whatever temptations come

round about us, this Holy Spirit will always be with us, to strengthen, to illuminate, to protect. So we must pray for this blessed Spirit of God. Lead me not *into* temptation, but lead me safely *through*.[31]

We are not then to be surprised at any assaults of Satan; temptations whereby he seeks to lead us into evil, snares whereby he seeks to hold us back to some immediate and visible result instead of letting us pass onward to the greater spiritual triumphs.

Satan's manifest assaults by wicked thoughts are not so dangerous as his hidden activeness in making things seem prosperous and beautiful, so that we would fain be contented in them. 'This is not your rest' *(Micah 2:10)*.

Spiritual self-satisfaction in the absence of temptation is far more hurtful than any foulness of imagination which humbles us and makes us hate ourselves.[15]

We must not be disheartened because assaulted, nor wish to choose our own temptations. Temptations which grieve us most are best for us. Temptations are to sanctify us. All great saints have gone through great temptations, though of various kinds. Our sanctification is a victory. A victory implies a struggle.[1]

Be not afraid because evil seems to you to be great; but be very much afraid when evil seems to

you to be small. When it seems to you that you have triumphed, when it seems to you that now you are at ease, when it seems to you that if things will only go on as they are you may go on well; then be quite sure that you are in your greatest danger. Your greatest danger is when you cease to feel the evil from which you need to be delivered.

We must call upon the power of almighty God, the fulness of the Holy Ghost, and being filled with the Holy Ghost and with power *(Acts 10:38)* we must meet all the opposition of the world around. Such must be our deliverance.[31]

Whenever God permits us to experience some great temptation, we must humble ourselves before him; but along with the humiliation we must always have more confidence, for he giveth more grace.[30]

Satan tries to persuade us when he tempts us that we cannot come to Jesus *because* of the temptation, —that it makes us unfit to come. But oh! that is the very reason why we should come. Temptations should form the very closest bond between us and our divine Lord, because they are a bond which makes us sure of the divine sympathy.

Even if we feel that we cannot come because of our halfheartedness, because of fear that we have connived with Satan by reason of our sinfulness; we must still remember that it is only by coming to Jesus that we can be cleansed from our halfhearted-

ness, and that we can only be washed from our sinfulness by plunging into the ocean of his love.[26]

God will not reject us because we have borne many wounds in coming to him, and are bleeding in the fight. He rejoices to see us longing for himself above all. He owns us as his children when the violence of Satan does not stay nor stifle us, but evokes from the depth of love a fresh tide of grateful song. We must press onward through these adverse circumstances to the glory of the Father's throne. Angels will guard, the Holy Spirit will strengthen us. The defilement will turn to glory amidst the welcome of heaven.[9]

Temptations always seem to us trifles when they are done with. Nothing ever seems to us worth having sinned for when we have had its gratification. The value of everything that tempts us is spent in a few moments, and we look upon the empty shell of the pleasure, and it seems to us impossible that it ever could exercise such a fascination over our souls.

What are all the objects of human ambition but toys? What is the utmost ambition of military prowess, or of legislative renown, or of financial opulence, or of social honours, or of worldly position, —what are they but toys? We do not find the true dignity of man in these things. We do not assure for ourselves any permanency by having any of these objects of the most developed ambition. Sin

consists in choosing that which is nothing worth, instead of Him who is worth all.[34]

13. Our Unfaithfulness

GOD'S changeless Word makes his faithfulness known to us. He bears witness to us concerning God and concerning our sins. His perfect humanity shows us how guilty we are. To the world, we must prove ourselves innocent if we would escape punishment. To God, we must confess ourselves to be guilty if we would attain to glory.[17]

The more fully we are conscious of sin, the more fully must we be conscious of the Power ready to raise us out of sin. The more fully we are conscious of the demands of the divine holiness, the more fully must we rely upon the power of the divine will to raise us up to that spotless holiness in which he rejoices. If God gives us pardon for sin,—if we believe in the forgiveness of sins,—it is not simply that sin may be forgiven,—that would be unworthy of God,—but that the sinner may be perfected in the blessed communion of saints, sanctified in the power of the Holy Ghost, and gathered up into all the glory of the Being of God.

So then, let us indeed, with a deepening sense of sin, be ever seeking after more and more holiness, and thus the sense of sin as it deepens upon the soul will not discourage us. It will not paralyze us, it

will not hold us down in incapacity, but along with this deepening sense of sin we may look for a deepening consciousness of divine renewal.[30]

O blessed Jesu, help us to look up to thee. Too often have we forsaken thee, too often wandered away from thee. Fix our hearts in thine alone, and so may we be delivered from the bonds of those sins whereby our souls have become darkened. O blessed Jesu, help us to realize that our own incapacity to rise up to thee springs from our own faithlessness.[25]

14. Penitence

NOUGHT but thy glory, Lord, can make me clean![3]

We are very apt to become despondent by dwelling on ourselves, our own shortcomings and errors. We dwell on ourselves, and never rise above ourselves. The thought of our own sinfulness alone will only bind us down to sin more strongly; but when we come to the consciousness of our own sin, we must look up to him in whom is our strength, our light, our joy, our all.

The soul looks up to Jesus, and looking up beholds the infinite power of divine help. The soul looks to Jesus and knows, feels, realizes that the consciousness of Jesus has never,—yes, amid all its wanderings or in the deepest gloom,—been obscured.

The Holy Spirit within the soul, whom Jesus has sent, has ever kept the soul within his fold, binding it, unseen, unfelt. He has shielded that soul in the fiercest attacks of the power of darkness, has given it a power against which Satan himself could not stand.

The soul looks to Jesus, and at last becomes aware of that enduring love which has ever been struggling to retain it, to call it back unto himself. The soul becomes aware of all this, through the penetrating light of the divine gaze, and bursts out into tears of penitential love and gratitude.

Oh, there can be no real penitence without gratitude! The soul must waken into gratitude, into deepest gratitude, in the light of Jesus, in the thought of all in it that has wounded and grieved his loving Sacred Heart.[25]

Deep sorrow occasioned by sin is no sign of sonship having been forfeited. Rather it is the voice of sonship speaking within our hearts. Those who have lost their sonship feel no anguish for their loss.[1]

Our penitence must not paralyze us with remembrance of nature, but quicken us with faithful hope in the exercise of grace. If we feel our need of mercy, we shall not be rejected for the greatness of our sin. Mercy includes righteousness. God cannot show us mercy and leave us sinners. He pardons by transforming. Forgiveness is restoration to service.

Justification is a power of doing righteousness and pleasing him.[1]

Penitence does not look merely for justice, pardon, grace. It looks to find rest in a personal Saviour. Penitence, purifying the heart, opens the eye of the soul to behold God. The ministry of penitence is not to make people feel their sins, but to see their Saviour. Without this vision, penitence is selfish, proud, earthly.

This vision lifts up the penitent with a necessity for living for the glory of God. This penitence is self-forgetful, humiliating, divine.[15]

Do not think your life to be thrown away because of any past sins. 'I believe in the forgiveness of sins.' This is an important article of faith. But of course, past sins do leave certain awkwardnesses which we must accept patiently with thankfulness. Be *thankful* that you have some difficulty to bear, some disappointment, some cloud. Accept it as the mode in which you are to give God thanks. Do not accept it in any spirit of sullenness, as if God had only half-forgiven you. He loves you as much as ever. See that you love him more than ever. Grow in his love, and earth's sorrows will lead you onward in heavenly love.[18]

Consider how the love of God holds the justice of God near to us. God's loving justice does not pass

away. The justice of the creature would long since have cast us off; it would not know what to do with us. The justice of God is of the nature of the Creator; it cannot be separated from his love. It is fertile in experiments. The justice of God works by making the voice of God to become dumb, and making us to speak; and while we speak, God listens. As the justice of God is communicated to our hearts, we condemn ourselves; and while we condemn ourselves God listens and wonders with holy joy as he welcomes back the penitent soul; God listens in the rapture of parental love, welcoming back the erring child.[36]

God's word of pardon does not merely remove an overhanging penalty of guilt; it gives the fulness of righteousness wherein the pardoned sinner is enabled henceforth to live before God. Were sin merely against a human law, pardon would be enough; but sin is against our divine relationship, and pardon will not restore the forfeited relationship unless there be along with it the real inherent life of active fellowship with God,—and that is supernatural righteousness.[14]

A teachable spirit is ready to learn both the truth of its own misery, and the truth of the divine glory.[3]

15. True Contrition

WE look to God and we see all manner of bounty streaming forth from him, and we ask him to 'Give.' And we look to ourselves, and we see all possibility of receiving choked up by the misery of sin, and we cry to him 'Forgive' *(Matt. 6:12)*. Yes, in vain it is for God to give to the sinner unless he has first of all granted forgiveness, so that the sinner may receive. Our transgressions come between us and God. They are a real separation, not upon the part of God, as people are very apt to imagine, but upon the part of man. Our trespasses, our sins, do not make God's bounty less. God is ever anxious to pour forth all his gifts. 'He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust' *(Matt. 5:45)*. As it is with his gifts in nature, so it is with his greater gifts of grace. He never holds them back because man's sin makes him unwilling to continue the benefit. But our sins separate us from God because they stop up our capacity for receiving. And however much God may give, until our sins have been taken away, the receptive power of our nature remains clogged. We cannot drink in the gift of God. 'Put away from us our transgressions,' that is the real meaning of 'forgive.' It is not merely 'Treat us as if we were not sinners,' but 'Change us so that our sins may no longer have any existence.' 'Put away from us our

transgressions, so that we may be able to profit by that which thy bounty provides.'[31]

Jesus does not leave the soul long in its bitterness if it has really felt that bitterness in its true fulness. The fretful soul may be left for a long time to itself. The anger of self-righteous pride, wounded by some moral fall, keeps the soul crushed, and has no spirit of refreshment; but the sweet consolation of divine love comes to the penitent who truly abases himself, accepting the divine judgement. 'He that humbleth himself shall be exalted' *(Luke 18:14)*. The sweetness of the divine welcome is all the greater, because it is accepted in unworthiness, not demanded as of right.[9]

In true contrition, the flame of love will break the heart indeed, and yet it is the instrument of a mysterious tenderness of joy. No joy to the soul is so great as is the penitence it offers for sin. We must not think that our life is to be spent in alternations of anguish for sin and joy at the divine acceptance. Anguish for sin must be the receptacle for divine joy; self-condemnation and gratitude to God exist together in mysterious union. There can be no act in which we so fully realize the joy, as in the act of our own self-condemnation.

In our feeble endeavours towards contrition, we may, indeed we often do, find human elements of sorrow, such as anger and indignation; but all these

need to be purged away before we can come to the holy joy of true contrition. Contrition should result in the filling of our whole being with the joyous consciousness of divine love.[36]

We must be careful that our penitence is of the true kind. It must be *tender*. Contrition springs out of love. It has no harshness about it. It springs out of the heart by the necessity of its own inspiration; it is the very light of the soul, the very consciousness of the love of God, and the longing of the soul to be conformed to him in love.

This tenderness of contrition enables us to penetrate into all God's secrets; to understand and rejoice in all discipline. We cannot rise to contrition by merely hating our sins; hatred cannot bring about the tenderness of divine love. We shall hate our sins truly when we attain to true contrition; having learned the love of God, we learn to hate what he hates.

As contrition is to be tender, so also it should be *strong*,—as the love of God is strong. Tenderness belongs to strength, not to feebleness. Oh wonderful strength of the contrite soul! It is strong with the strength of God. It never has need to be violent, for it knows itself unassailable in the strength of continual adoration.

In true contrition we find the calm tranquil strength of the faithful soul yielding itself up unconsciously to the love of God. The soul does not

do violence to itself; but rather offers itself to suffer all things willingly at the hand of God. It feels that it deserves whatever it may have to suffer; recognizing everything about it that is contrary to it as an instrument of the divine justice. It does not repine under divine discipline, since it knows the divine love.

The contrite soul is strong in resisting temptation. It undergoes many temptations, but these temptations serve but to strengthen its love of God. The soul is content to wait amid temptations. It knows that the tyranny will not be forever. It longs with a calm longing to love better. In this calmness, temptations come in vain against it. But what if in its weakness it fall into sin? Even then it neither despairs nor presumes. It learns to be more contrite, and looks away from itself to the love of God; for the sight of God is ever a source of infinite strength.

Contrition produces true poverty of spirit. The contrite heart knows that nothing can happen to disturb its relation to God. It forestalls God's judgements, and meets them with the utterance of benediction.[29]

We must make continual acts of love towards Jesus, such as those would make who do love him. Do not say 'Oh, but that would be unreal!' No, the effort to love is the beginning of love. It is a great mercy when we know how little we love Jesus, and it is the first step towards loving him more. We

must be careful to be doing such acts of love as we really can. These may be acts of *penitence,* penitential love springing out of sorrow for sin, because by our sin we have inflicted wounds on him who bore our sins. We only begin to sorrow aright in sympathy with Jesus,—in the school of the Heart of Jesus.

And there must be acts of *sympathy* and *confidence,* reposing all our trust in him, casting ourselves at his feet that he may do with us as he pleases. We must have confidence in his power to save, and in his love whereby he saves. His power and his love are equal and infinite. We must realize that he is Jesus, and that no greatness of past sin can hinder his love. He has not cast us away, and he will not; he is ready to welcome us still.

And then we must make acts of *mistrust of our own selves.* We are not to come with self-assurance, as if by our own efforts we could do better henceforth. We must ask for the gift of his grace, that we, who would be sure to cast ourselves away if he left us, may remain in the firm grasp of his love.

And then acts of *self-abasement* in the presence of Jesus Christ, asking for the gift of his love in spite of our own unworthiness. The more we abase ourselves, the more will he pour out his grace into our hearts.

And we must make acts of *dedication.* We mourn the past, but we must come to the future with Jesus in the freshness of his unchanging strength. We must dedicate ourselves with the desire to be nothing.

Our sorrow should not be that we are so weak; but that our nature is so strong. If we could get rid of self, then Jesus would shine out in us. In proportion as we lose the thought of self in the consciousness of his almighty goodness, so will he manifest himself more and more. To have Jesus manifested in the soul is to have the very fulness of heaven. The loss of self is hard and painful in the beginning, but it is an ecstasy of joy when attained.[29]

The penitent soul surrenders itself to every form of discipline that may be necessary to perfect it for the presence of the divine life within. It longs not only to be developed in holiness and sanctity of life, but to be purged from sin, that it may be the more worthy to receive its Lord, its treasure.

Thus does the penitent soul dedicate itself to God, accepting everything as coming from him, as the fulfilment of the divine purpose for itself. The soul seeks not to do, but is content to suffer. It knows that the end of its creation is the contemplation of the divine perfection; and the more it contemplates this, the more does it realize the necessity of further purification, in order that it may gaze into the mysteries of God.

Thus the penitent soul is transformed, absorbed, developed, purified, sanctified, deified in the love of Jesus; living, basking in the love of him; enlightened in the effulgence of the divine light; finding its rest, its peace, its satisfaction, in Jesus alone, for

whom it was fashioned and from whom it has been so long alienated, wandering away in darkness and in sin.[25]

As we contemplate each act of sin, there ought to be a desire on our part to make compensation. Yet inasmuch as we have sinned against God, no sort of compensation attempted by us could possibly make up for such an outrage as is sin against God. These two can never be matched.

But the Holy Ghost, pouring the love of God into our hearts, pours into our acts a fulness of divine power; and while these acts, if done in our own power, would be utterly worthless, when they are done in the power of the Holy Ghost, they rise up before God with the fragrance of the humanity of Christ,—and in the fulness of the merits of Christ. Such are the acts of our regenerate life, if we are being true to the power of that life. It is only those acts which are done in the power of our regenerate life, only those done by the virtue of regenerating grace, that avail and rise up and are accepted as compensation for past sin which we have done.

Such acts are the acts of Jesus Christ himself within us; they spring out of the merits of Christ. They are the acts of the Spirit of Christ, by which his humanity was quickened, and which now continues to work in ourselves,—that Spirit which quickens his acts quickens ours as well. The Holy Ghost dwelling in Christ unites us to him, and communi-

cates to us not merely the past merits of his acts, but also the living energy by which those acts were done. These living principles of our Lord's life continue to operate within us as his members; they are communicated to us by the Holy Ghost, so that we act in the same power by which he acted. It is the Holy Ghost dwelling in Christ's humanity which makes that humanity germinant in us. This is what St Paul calls 'Christ being formed in us' *(Gal. 4:19)*. That is not metaphorical. There is a real forming of the real Christ in each one of us, so that he acts in us as truly as in his natural body while on earth.[36]

Many desire to mortify themselves, but not in the straightforward way of their everyday life. They want a *great* mortification, something to look back upon. But the soul that neglects little acts because it wants to do greater ones will never attain to advanced holiness. It is the continued dying to self which is the true mortification. See that you are particular about rising at the proper hour; obeying with alacrity the voice of God; carrying out all the acts of the day with promptitude; and in doing these things feel the companionship of Jesus. Hear the voice of Jesus calling you, do not loiter, but be with him in his work of penitence.[24]

16. Work

WE must go forth to our work identified with our Lord Jesus. Consider our Lord's devotion to the work he had before him. With what calmness he goes forth; there is no hurry in anything that he does. It was our Lord's entire acquiescence to God which made him so calm. Let us then learn to rest on God, and do everything at the appointed hour. In the busiest life, the mind must recognize that God has an appointed hour for everything.

Remember that there can be but one duty for one moment. There can never be two duties which interfere; one is a duty, the other is not, though it may sometimes be difficult to distinguish which is the duty. Let us mark the care with which our Lord sets about his work and strive to imitate it.

Our Lord knew that his work would culminate in the intensest suffering; and though God may give us consolations, we must not live on those consolations, but remember that the suffering of Calvary was the end to which our Lord looked forward. We must not think that we shall be exempted from that suffering which belongs to the Body of Christ. We may be sure that if we are faithful he will reward our faithfulness; but surely the more faithful we are, the more we shall be tried. Our Lord went forth to suffer, and we must learn to take up our cross and follow him *(Matt. 16:24)*.

He went forth to Galilee detached from all idea

of human success, but as he looked forward to the suffering, he looked still further onward. He 'endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God' *(Heb. 12:2)*. We too must look forward to the crown which is set before us as the prize of victory.[24]

Those who are called to do the highest work are not therefore called to the highest joys, but to the deepest sorrows. It is not exulting in spirit, going forth with reckless impetuosity to do great things; it is not so that the voice of God calls the soul. But it is when the soul feels itself weak, held down by Satan, very weak and yet persevering; looking up to him who can hear its cry, yet who seems not to hear; then it is that the soul shall at last achieve the greatest work for God. Having been baptized with the baptism of Christ, it rises up to live the life of Jesus Christ *(Cf. Matt. 20:22)*.[27]

How needful it is to remember that God accepts our service by the perfection wherewith we render it, and not by the consequences which seem to follow it. The consequences are his gift to us, and will be abundantly given in due time. We have to do our work, and leave it simply to him.[8]

We are not to limit our work nor to measure it by the limit of any value it may seem to have in this world. We are not to think a work great which

seems great to the world; nor that a small work which seems small to the world. That work is great which is absorbed in the love of God, since it is done in the almighty power of the Holy Ghost. No work is small, however small it may seem to be in this world, if it be done in the power of the Holy Ghost. But that work is small, however great it may seem to be, which is done in any other power. If done in any other power it is worthless.[36]

What we do for God is not of value by reason of the external effort or power put forth in it. God is just as much pleased when we do his will in the feebleness of the sick chamber, as when we are doing it with the utmost activity in missionary or educational work. We have to be doing all for him, sometimes in active work, sometimes in seclusion. Our hearts may long to go forth to do great things in the world; but perhaps the really great thing we have to do is to restrain these longings, and to fix our hearts on God,—longing to do his will. Oh, let us take care that we are doing all our work because it is what God gives us to do! How apt we are to joy in active work because we feel we are doing so much good, exercising the energy of a powerful nature, influencing others. How apt we are to forget that all we do is of no use if done merely for our own delight, or for any other reason save that God has given it to us to do.

Our life on earth is a life of discipline. By the

activities of earth we are being prepared for the activity of heaven. The results of what we have done we have to leave behind; but the work has to follow us *(Rev. 14:13)*. We are not to think that the work of our past life has ceased because we are no longer able to continue the toils in which we once had a share. We are not to look back and think, 'How much I used to do!' but, 'What has that past life done for me? Has it marked me for God's service? Has it developed in me the pure energy of filial love to God?' The work has passed, but the love has not. If our work was really done in the love of God, then it follows us here, and shall follow us from time into eternity.

So let us see that we do everything for the glory of God, quite content to forego any glory of our own; leaving all to God, sure that any glory we gain apart from God is no glory at all. Whatever glory we gain abiding in God, he will count as his glory, and we ourselves shall share it as abiding in God. God welcomes us in all our endeavours, if we are really seeking in all things to praise him.[42]

We must not shrink from doing what God gives us to do because we think we may do it badly; we must go on in the obedience of faith, knowing the incapacity of our nature. We must look for results because God's word cannot but be efficacious, not because of any natural capacities of our own.

So in our own life and in the life of the Church,

we have to wait for our time and for our work. Wait on God. The true time and work are coming for which he has been preparing us; although when they come they may well prove to be a very different work, and at a very different time, from what we had expected.[29]

Natural repugnance does not hinder the self-oblation of the cross, but makes it the more perfect. We must minister to others, not because it pleases us, but because they need help; not because they welcome us, but because God sends us. We must identify ourselves with the divine mission.[6]

God will not suffer his Word to fall to the ground, if we are true to him. What we speak in our own strength dies in the air. What we speak in the power of the Spirit is sure to travel on until it reaches the heart which God has prepared for it. The words that we speak really in his name are put into a safe post-box, and are sure to be delivered to the proper person. I fear it makes one feel how often one has spoken mere human words, when one reflects how much of one's preaching has come to naught. So often our words are very true,—but not the living truth. We should try always thus to speak as the oracles of God *(1 Peter 4:11)*.[18]

We need to be the supernatural mouthpieces of the Holy Ghost. It is not the written Word, nor

even the Word hidden in Sacraments, but the Word manifest in our persons which must convert the world.[19]

The more truly we are given to God, the more possible it is for us to be his instruments in bringing others to him. *We* cannot bring any to him, but *his* peace shining through us can draw others to himself, if there is nothing in ourselves to hinder it.[19]

God works in ways that we can little expect. If we live true to him, he will bring people to himself through us. It is not our work which brings them, it is his, and so often he brings the most unlikely![19]

We may be quite certain that God will not interfere so as to provide for us in some supernatural way what we could obtain by natural means. God has not instituted his heavenly kingdom in this world with the intention of superseding the laws of the world; but for the purpose of developing our life in active union with himself.[5]

17. God's Call

THE eternal Word, dwelling in us, is ever speaking by the power of the Holy Ghost.

We are not left in doubt as to his will, for if we will be attentive, he is continually suggesting what will be most helpful to us. He must inspire, as well as answer, our prayers; speak in us to God, as well as

speak from God to us. He makes divine sweetness to fill the soul with the experience of the Father's love when we listen to him.

He gives us the power to hear whatever he speaks, and we have to yield ourselves up to that power with confidence. There must be attention on our part. His first creative voice called us out of nothing, but his sanctifying voice calls us onward. It is the completion of the original creative utterance.

It is not sensible emotions, nor visions, nor revelations of mystery, nor gifts of miraculous power, nor the accomplishment of outward things, nor the vocation to special sufferings, which give the assurance of the Bridegroom's voice. The voice of the Bridegroom calls us simply to himself, and onward in himself to various degrees of fellowship on the highway of the Holy Cross. It is not *what* he says, it is the voice of the speaker which contains all within itself,—for it is the voice of the incarnate God.

If we have heard that voice in each call continuously, then our joy must be fulfilled, however much we may have seemed to fail. If we have taken one step after another *without* hearing that voice, then we can have no true joy, however much we may have seemed to succeed.

That voice is itself the food of the soul which lives in its power. It reveals the fulness of joy, the all-sufficing delight of unchanging love.

Jesus calls us to that which is beyond our powers, but as he gives strength to the obedient soul which

hears his voice, the heart becomes humbled in the sense of its own weakness; and yet shrinks from nothing, in the confidence of divine co-operative grace. Thus the soul becomes ready to receive fresh calls from God, and rises from strength to strength until the goal of the heavenly Zion shall be fully attained *(Ps. 84:7)*.

How dangerous are the calls of God, if the soul shrinks from obeying them! How wonderful are the transformations of grace if the soul advances in obedience with humility and faith![15]

Perhaps God calls more than once, but when he calls the second time, the ear of the soul is deafer than it was at first. If the calls of God are allowed to pass unheeded, the conscience becomes deafened.[28]

We are not to doubt our Lord's call to follow him, but we are not to think that we can omit any of the steps which he has taken. 'Follow thou me' *(John 21:22)*. 'Follow me with exactness.' If we are in the way, we shall be sure to arrive safely at the end. but if we think to make the way shorter, we shall find that our impetuosity turns to our destruction.[7]

God created thee without thy will, but thy will must co-operate for thy restoration. Thou canst not of thyself turn thy heart from earthly things to heavenly. God does not force thee by omnipotence, he allures thee by the power of the goodness of his

Being; that beginning to know how he loves thee, thou mayest learn to love him.[14]

The voice of God as it speaks to us is ever calling us on to something further. God calls us to do what we have not power to do. He does not call us to do merely what he has already empowered us to do, he calls us on. How then can we obey this call when we have not the power? It is the call of love, and we can obey; as we cast ourselves upon it, the love which gave the call empowers us to obey. We are to listen to that voice, not only as a voice of admonition but as a voice of praise, calling us on to the life of praise, to take our part with those who 'rest not day and night' *(Rev. 4:8)* from the song of praise, gathered already into the blessed unity of his mysterious voice. Let us listen to the call as to the voice of our Creator. Say not, 'At certain points of my life I might have listened, but now I cannot.' No, rather say, 'O my God, I hear thy voice; I hear thy call; I accept thy call; whatever thou mayest desire of me I can obey.'[36]

God calls us, not because of any thing he finds in us, but to make his glory manifest in our littleness. Let us think of this. It is not what God calls us *from*, but what he calls us *to*.

The call of God is the call of the Creator. He finds us little, but makes us great, changes us, so that we are no longer what we were. The transformation

is a real transformation. God finds us poor and ignorant, having nothing within ourselves. He supplies the lack when he gives the call. We are slow to realize this. We cling to the thought of what we have been, and think that we shall remain the same. As well might the earth called out of chaos, a thing without form, and void *(Gen. 1:2)*, remain the same after God's light had poured its rays upon it. God said 'Let there be light' *(Gen. 1:3)*, and when the light obeyed his call, the dark earth was transformed by its glory.

The call to us is a pledge of its fulfilment if we do but accept it.[26]

Let us learn to cherish within ourselves a real longing for the divine glory. God calls us, calls us to himself, calls us onward and onward. The call at times seems to assume a form of beauty before the eye. Then again, the form disappears, but we know that it is still there. Though we see it not, we seek to gaze upon it with an intense faith. Again and again it shines out; we find it drawing us toward itself. At last it shines out clearly before us, never again to be obscured. At last,—at last,—our prayers shall have attained to their completeness in the glory of God.[21]

We must look at the Religious Life as being, not a form of life which *we* choose; not a short, much less an easy, way to heaven by which *we* are deter-

mined to make our way; but as being the particular sphere to which *God calls us*, upon which we enter with no other reason than the simple reason of obedience. The reason why we become Religious is because we dare not disobey the heavenly vision *(Cf. Acts 26:19)*.

The Religious Life is a life of manifold difficulty and incomparable danger, but it is a stern necessity to every one that God has called. And to those whom God has called, it is a life of joy most ravishingly sweet, if they are obedient.[32]

18. Seeking Holiness

IF some wise and important words should be written upon paper, their value would not be diminished although the paper itself should be a worthless scrap. We are worthless, but if God is pleased to write upon us the Word of truth, our nature takes its dignity from what he has written. It is the living Word of the eternal God, and lives of its own inherent power. Our life comes altogether from God, not from our weak nature, not from within but from without, not because we are worthy but because God spoke the Word.

We can therefore accomplish the divine purpose, however unworthy we ourselves may be. We are not to dwell on the thought of our weakness, but in the consideration of his changeless love and his wondrous glory, which makes itself more and more manifest,

while it transforms those to whom it comes. The Word of God has come to us; in it we must live, outside it we can have no life. 'He that hath the Son hath life' *(1 John 5:12).*

Losing sight of our own weakness, let it be our joy to contemplate in self-forgetful love, the glory of him who hath so loved us, and who will love us unto the end *(Cf. John 13:1).*[26]

Man is called to rejoice in God's truth as a continually progressive acquisition. The Word of God will be ever making known to the blessed ones in heaven, the glory of the Father. Man is called to a life of eternal energy in union with God by his Word, and that life of active union is a life of progressive experience. The beatific vision will not be a stationary contemplation of a fixed form. It will be a participation in a life eternally strong and eternally fresh.[3]

The cravings after human perfection and glory are not given to us for nothing. In common men they spend themselves in idle dreamings, which waste, instead of strengthening the nature. If those dreams were but turned into prayers, we should find that our whole life would be a growth. If we directed them as energies of apprehension towards God, laying hold of his love thereby, we should find that the divine strength did indeed glorify us with the very glory of Christ.[4]

God will always be found of such as diligently seek him. We must seek him in his glory. He is always seeking us in our earthly hiding places, that he may raise us to live with him in the glory of his love.[16]

The humblest person, in the lowest station and with the meanest gifts, who has a definite consciousness of his Creator's will for himself, as being the purpose which he has carried out, has within himself a principle of nobility, a principle of stability, which the greatest of statesmen, and of conquerors, and of men of fashion and of science, lack.[34]

We must not aspire to become *great* saints; but seek rather to be holy, than great. The soul desiring to be a great saint, sees the greatness in preference to the holiness; and that is a thought of self.[26]

Faith rises to the invisible, and thus attains to God's presence. It is made perfect by love, it works by love. It cannot exist without loving; for it measures unseen realities by their own intrinsic goodness, not by the deceptive measure of earthly appearance or results.[5]

If we knew the reality of the work of faith, we should find a much greater joy in doing things of whose result we can form no anticipation, than we should in doing things of whose natural result we

are certain. The latter act, however successful, is of nature only. The former act, however little we may anticipate its issue, is an act living with the power of God; and we in doing it become fellow-workers with God.[5]

Only by the power of the Holy Ghost can we know the things of God, and the glory of the eternal mysteries. Not by any change on God's part, lowering himself to us, but by change in ourselves, elevating us to him, must we come to see the things of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost 'takes and shows' unto us *(Cf. John 16:5)* the Godhead which is in Christ by making us partakers of the divine nature *(Cf. 2 Peter 1:4)*.[1]

If the soul is really choosing God, then every act becomes a bond of union between the soul and God. Whenever we do anything because we have chosen God; that act, as it were, draws up the divine power underlying the depth of our being, and by which we live.

The life of Jesus Christ, as revealed to each soul, becomes the vocation of that soul.

Love cannot be measured. We never can be said to be loving enough. There is no such thing as entering heaven on a principle of sufficiency.[37]

There can be no failure to those who love God, our only failure can be in not loving him.[25]

Teachableness is the characteristic of all who would make progress in the Way of Life. We have to learn with the simplicity of little children. By the cross we must learn God's decrees. Then we shall praise him when all is finished. Then will the glory of the reward ensue.

The way of God's precepts is the way of the Holy Cross, wherein we follow the example of Christ. God must teach us to understand this way. The more we continue to walk in it, the more shall we see its goodness. There must be an understanding heart, and this the Holy Ghost alone can give. We must search into the mysteries of Christ's Passion; his filial love to the Father, his redeeming love to man, his interior joy in holiness, his hatred of sin, his triumphant endurance whereby he showed himself the conqueror of Satan. It is only the humble penitent who can attain this wisdom. The more we understand God's precepts, the more shall we behold his wonders. Each revelation discloses fresh wonders to the humble penitent.[16]

Patience is most perfect when the visible result is least encouraging. Its efficiency is entirely within. By patience, the soul acts upon itself, exerting self-control and forming itself so as to find a tranquil joy in the adverse appointments of God's providence.

By patience the soul acquires a special habit of communion with God by the very fact of thus accepting the divine will in contradiction to its own

natural impulses. The acceptance of the divine will becomes a real habit, which identifies the higher self with God, and loses all consciousness of existence outside of God.

By patience we learn to abide in the divine eternity, looking for God's will to be accomplished in due season, regardless of the sufferings of the intervening period, in perfect confidence that the eternal issue will be for good.[3]

God uses our weakness to make manifest his strength. How one finds this exemplified time after time; and again how difficult it is for us to accept in all its fulness that other truth,—that he who uses our weakness sets aside our strength. It is so difficult for us to realize that our strength must be set aside; so difficult for us to set it aside, in order that we may be available for his purposes. Yet we find as time goes on, that so it is. Whatever it is on which we may have relied, God is sure to set it aside, and if we can join with him or forestall him in so doing, then indeed we shall find the blessing.[19]

Humility is not dwarfed pride which is apt to walk about the earth under the phases of self-depreciation; but that which loses itself altogether in God, which knows itself in its nothingness because it knows God in his power.[32]

Humility shrinks not from humiliations. Whatever good we find in ourselves we must attribute to

God; whatever evil, to ourselves. It is not the shrinking from the acknowledgement of certain excellencies which constitutes humility. The more we acknowledge what God has done for us in giving us certain capacities of nature or supernatural gifts of grace, the more we ought to recognize our own unworthiness in having turned God's gifts to so little account.[29]

Humility is not only ready to do anything for anyone, but it is also ready to receive anything at other peoples' hands. Many people will humble themselves to do abasing actions, and will not humble themselves to receive little kindnesses. It is a great token of humility to receive kindnesses at all peoples' hands. Humility purges the soul from pride, but humility fills the soul with that best form of self-respect,—never thinking about itself. Humility preserves from any sense of humiliation. It gives the soul such a divine dignity that it never feels itself capable of suffering an injury.[22]

Freedom does not consist in being able to do our own will; but in knowing what the truth is, that we may walk in the love of the truth, and may be kept free from the snares of deceitful lusts. 'Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free' *(John 8:32)*. There is no other freedom. To think ourselves free because we can do what we like, is the worst slavery. The freedom of the divine life is the

freedom to exercise divine goodness. That is the freedom of God. He who has this freedom is admitted into the divine sonship, and abideth in the house of God his Father for ever *(Cf. Ps. 23:6)*.[14]

The nothingness of the creature contains within itself the glory of the Creator; therefore the glory of the Creator should make us indifferent as to what *form* the nothingness of the creature may present. Are we really ready to receive all things at God's hands, whether great or small? Are we just as content to have some great trouble come to us as some great joy? Sometimes indeed, great troubles are easier to bear than smaller ones, because of the great and sensible grace which accompanies them. Great troubles are not always the most dangerous for us to experience, but rather those troubles which, while they are comparatively insignificant, yet tend to fill up our whole life; such as the clouding-over of a soul that never experiences the shining-out of the conscious love of God. At times, however, we shall all have great trials. We must prepare for them by practising the meeting with God and the choosing of God continually, in those smaller matters of which most of our life is made up.

Holy indifference is not any sort of apathy or dulness, but rather the intensest energy of a soul living in the divine fellowship, and feeding upon God in all it does. God can reveal himself to us under all conditions, but he cannot reveal himself to

a soul that makes any conditions. We must learn to trust God as to the way by which he would bring us to himself. We must learn indifference as to the working out of our spiritual life, as well as to the working out of our outward life. We must be content to draw near to God by whatever form of vocation he may mark out for us.[29]

Do not let yourself be discouraged because progress is not made faster, either in yourself or in others. Forget progress, and look to the very end of all,—to Jesus at the right hand of God. With eyes firmly fixed on him, we shall not know much of progress until we find ourselves absorbed in him to whom we look.[19]

19. Sharing in Christ's Glory

JESUS Christ waited thirty years for what appeared to be only three years' ministry. But he was not waiting for those three years of earthly ministration, but that he might enter into glory; that having fulfilled his Father's will, he might sit forever at the right hand of God.

And *that* is our vocation. Not that we may accomplish some work on earth, but that we may be prepared to die; and that through death we may pass to eternal life.

Work is not the end, it is but the instrument to the end.[26]

We live between the one glory, the baptismal majesty of the past as it shines round about us; and the glory of the eternal which awaits us if we are true. As the ending shall be, such was the beginning, and the intermediate state of our earthly probation must rise up to this glory of our beginning and ending.[4]

St Paul's preaching evidently had much more to do with that which came after the Cross than with that which led up to it,—Christ in glory, and ourselves bearing the cross, that we may rise to the glory. We can never rise to the patience, boldness, perseverance of Christ, unless we are living in and calling others to share the glory of the life wherewith he abides as our high priest at the right hand of God *(Cf. Heb. 8:1)*.[19]

Examine thyself then, as to thy love of Jesus upon the throne of his glory. Do not think of that as if it were a world far away. Jesus is very near to thee; nearer than he could be when he walked in natural form upon the earth. Seek to live in his love. Look up to him in his glory. See 'the heavens opened, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God' *(Acts 7:55,56)*. Meditate upon the glory of Jesus, and learn to live in the love of that glory, watching for it to shine out more fully. Yes, blessed are all they that love his appearing! *(Cf. 2 Tim. 4:8)*[21]

We must ever be looking to Jesus at the right hand of God, that in him we may have that life and strength which belongs to him alone. We live in him with his life. Were he to forsake that throne of power, and come near to us by submitting to lower ways of earthly approach, we should lose that power which is our glory. We could not have it, were he not there. His presence with us in power and glory depends upon his absence from the limitations of natural feebleness. It was 'expedient for us that he went away' *(Cf. John 16:7)*. So then, having entered into his glory, he bids us live with him there. To see Jesus in heaven, implies a perfect union with him in that heavenly life.[11]

We must lay hold upon the glory of Christ as the basis and life of the eternal kingdom. The triumphant glory of the incarnate Son of God, the Redeemer, is the fundamental principle which sustains the universe which he created; permeates it, quickens it, develops it in purposes of expanding power, elevates it as an object of the Father's love. God's decree shall make all who enter this eternal kingdom to share the glory of the eternal Son.[16]

No effort of the natural will can rise up to be where Jesus is. Jesus has glorified the Father upon the earth *(Cf. John 17:4)*. Therefore can he rise up from earth to heaven. No one can rise up thither unless he has glorified the Father in like manner.

We may long to follow Christ by some rapid process of natural discovery, but we cannot do so save by the lingering process of giving glory to God amidst lifelong temptations. These must be borne in the fellowship of Jesus. Then shall we come to be with him.

The glory of Jesus is not a glory which the natural man can merit by any natural virtue, nor by any sublimity of conception, nor by any demonstrative intelligence. The glory to which he has gone, and whither he calls his people to follow him by grace, is beyond all the conditions of humanity. Jesus could not go save by dying. Nor can we follow, save by a lifelong death of grace.[7]

To see the glory of God without seeing Jesus would be death and not life. In Jesus all the glory of God is concentrated and revealed for our salvation, which otherwise would be for our destruction. Jesus has triumphed over death, and we must be looking to him in his triumphant glory. We cannot use the grace that he gives to us, unless we are looking to the glory from whence he gives it.

We cannot see Jesus unless we see the heavens opened *(Cf. Acts 7:56)*. He cannot now humble himself to be seen and known in an earthly existence only, as when he emptied himself of the divine glory, becoming incarnate. Now that he is glorified, he cannot lay his glory aside. He cannot be seen save by those who can see into the opened heavens, and

behold his glory there. It is not enough for us to contemplate his Passion, and to think how much he loved us whilst enduring it. We must contemplate his glory and think how much he loves us still.[4]

The feast of the Ascension helps us to realize the unity of the glorious life which thrills through the whole Body of Christ, the head and the members. It would seem as if Christ, passing during the nine days* through the orders of the heavenly hierarchy, passing on from one to another, were glorified in his humanity with the glory proper to each of these orders. Each order had, as it were, a crown prepared in their midst for the Son of Man,—and yet not one, nor all of them together,—could satisfy his requirements of glory. So he passes on *beyond* them, to take the glory of God at the right hand of God. But there he is not glorified in his own Person alone; his Apostles had fed upon him, had his body within them by virtue of the Holy Eucharist, although they had not yet come to live thereby. He was in them, but they were not yet in him. Now, upon his Ascension, his body *in them* is glorified instantaneously with the glorifying of his body at the right

* The nine days between the Ascension and Pentecost symbolize for Father Benson the increasing glorification of Christ's humanity, corresponding to the nine traditional orders of the angelic hierarchy. But the fulness of glory for Christ's humanity can be attained only when he finally comes to sit at the right hand of God.

hand of the Father. Like an electric flash, the glory of the Spirit shines out in the fires of Pentecost. The body of Christ, however veiled in our flesh,—in our sinful persons,—nevertheless cannot but have the glory of the Spirit of holy fire, burning and resting upon it. We do not dwell, as we ought to dwell, upon the *present* glorification of our nature, in our own persons, as members of the glorified body of Christ. It was this cherished remembrance which enabled the early Christians to triumph over the world.

I always feel that the triumphing Church used to live in the contemplation of Jesus at the right hand of God. Then, when the brightness of worldly position obscured that vision, the Church sank back of necessity into the historical consideration of the Passion, and fell from its mysterious inner glory to its sorrowful exterior; but if we are to win the victory of the last days, we must rise up to that fellowship with Jesus sitting at the right hand of power. We need to feel that glory round about ourselves.

It is while we live in that glory that we find the living power of the Passion, which otherwise is so apt to crumble away into empty phraseology, or pretty and puerile devotions. The Holy Sacrifice should help us in the constant contemplation of the glorified Lamb bearing the marks of his Passion, each wound living on, not as an earthly woe, but as a heavenly mystery. Try to live in this fellowship

of the ascended Lord. Distractions cannot find their way within the compass of this heavenly fire.[19]

20. The Glory of the Common Life

IN the desire of earthly glory there is selfishness, for it is an individual ambition; but in the desire of heavenly glory, self is surrendered to God,—for no one in that heavenly kingdom can live to himself. There we can have no glory but the glory whereby God, who is the source of our life, glorifies himself in us,—and that glory is no separate communication. It is the glory of the common life, wherein we all shall live in the divine consciousness. The glory of heaven is the love which rejoices in all the glory of God, as manifested in all that are around. There the saints shall rejoice, each in the glory of all. Such is the communion of saints. Such is the common life of the Church. Such is the undivided life of the Body of Christ. All that we have, we possess along with the rest as the common gift from Christ the head to all the members of his body. All that Christ imparts to others is no less our own because it is manifested in them. That self-forgetful love which the Holy Ghost inspires amidst the discipline of earthly life, is the only glory whereby the faithful can attain to find themselves in Christ when he shall come in his kingdom.[16]

God is to be loved under every form in which he is

seen, and God comes to us in various forms. There, in that higher world, God comes forth in the fulness of revelation. Here, he comes forth veiled and hidden. The child of Bethlehem is the hidden God. The fulness of the glory of God is there, the Second Person of the blessed Trinity is incarnate; and where he is, there the Father and the Holy Ghost are present also, in the undivided glory of substantial Being. Bethlehem has passed away, but that cradle has been multiplied; and wheresoever the people of God are found, there the hidden God demands our love; and wheresover we find any who is a member of Christ, there must we love that one even as we would love Christ. If we are to have eyes to see God in his glory, we must have eyes to see God in our struggling brother when in the presence of the Tempter; we must have eyes to see God in every one of our brethren; for if we cannot see God when he is with us, it would be a vain pretence to suppose that the vision of his glory would be any other than blindness to our undisciplined eyes. 'If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?' *(1 John 4:20)* If we do not love God thus in those that are round about us on earth, partakers along with us of the divine nature *(Cf. 2 Pet. 1:4)*, it is in vain for us to say that we love God in himself.[30]

A Religious House has never earned its name until the fragrance of supernatural charity has filled the whole house. Brotherly love is supernatural because it springs out of love to God.

If we realize those about us as being partakers with us in a supernatural call, then how can we help loving them?

We must realize our community as embodying the inner life of the Holy Ghost. We must see Christ in all our brothers. Unless we love Christ in our brethren, he will not accept our love.

This brotherly love is the work of the Holy Ghost, forming Christ in each of us *(Cf. Gal. 4:19)*. It is the gift of the Holy Ghost, whereby we are enabled to love Christ. The natural heart can never love Christ, for it is a supernatural gift whereby we love him. We must never fancy that our natural instincts will turn us towards the love of Christ. It is the Holy Ghost only who makes us see Christ in our brethren and love him in them. 'He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?' *(1 John 4:20)*

It is not because we have common tastes, a common aim, common dangers, a common purpose, a common sense of the glory into which we are called, that we can be sure of abiding in brotherly love. It is only by having the spirit of love poured out into the soul. This love must overcome every difference of taste, training, work, nationality; we must simply be absorbed into a supernatural unity, where Christ

is the common life of all, and the individual is gladly lost in him.[29]

The presence of brotherly love in a community is the proof that the other three virtues,—poverty, chastity, and obedience,—have taken root. It is a miserable poverty which holds back any of its affections from any companion. True poverty opens all its doors; welcomes all, serves all. That is a spurious chastity which holds itself aloof from the brethren. If we hold our affections back from earthly things, is it not in order that we may give them to Jesus Christ? And how can we possibly love Jesus Christ if we do not love his members? Is he obedient who has forgotten to fulfil the very first commandment of all,—'This is my commandment, that ye love one another'? *(John 15:12)*[29]

21. The Glory of the Risen Life

THE life really sacrificed to God recognizes every breath as belonging to God; and so every act must be done, not simply for the glory of God externally, or for the advancement of his glory in the world, but really and truly for the glory of God in our hearts, for the advancement of his glory in our lives; really and truly for the glory of God in our own selves. He trains us by his external glory and by the discipline of the outer life, that our lives may be to his external glory, while we exhibit his sanctity.[23]

Enter by faith into the blessedness of the buried life. The glorious resurrection shall follow. So in all periods of outward overthrow or retirement, in sickness, in want, we are to feel the reality of blessing. The triumph of Christ begins in such experiences. We have to feed upon the Paschal Lamb, not merely substantially by sacramental participation, but morally, by the joyous surrender of ourselves to be dead to the world along with him that we may live with him in the truth of his divine power.[17]

As we rise up to the discipline of grace, so also we are being prepared for the participation of glory in the risen life. The glorified multitude of the saints will all be one body, testifying to the glory of Christ as Head over all. His Spirit was their life, his virtue their strength, his Passion their law, his Cross their discipline, his communicated Substance the principle of their resurrection. His likeness stamped upon them with living power is the degree of glory wherein they are to rise. The glories wherewith they shall be crowned in him will be the counterpart of the sufferings which by his grace they have borne for his sake.[8]

Divine love towards Jesus is especially developed by fellowship in his risen life. Human affections towards Christ are stirred by the contemplation of his Passion; but the calm adoring love which he requires can only be obtained by the experience of

his life, holding us up along with himself in God. Hence arises the great importance of meditating constantly upon his life in glory. Our love to him must rise to the dignity of his heavenly glory from whence it has its origin.[11]

Contemplate the process of resurrection. In one sense, resurrection is an instantaneous act, as the Incarnation was an instantaneous act, and as is our regeneration. But as our Lord lived on earth many years, so we too have to rise gradually to the glory of our resurrection, as the continuous action of our will stablishes us in union with Christ. It is a process, instantaneous in its origin, but continually carried out by all the acts of the Christian life, till its perfect development at the last great day in the redemption of our bodies. As our nature takes into itself the substance of the resurrection life of Christ, we are incorporated into Christ. Christ must be incorporated into us till there remains no faculty that is not full of Christ.

The resurrection of Christ is thus no mere pledge of a future resurrection. It is a principle of resurrection now going on within us, and in which we must act, moment by moment. The world would have no power over us if we would but realize that we indeed bear within ourselves him who is himself all that future glory.[28]

The body of Christ is given to us. It is purging

our humanity. The habits of the supernatural life of Christ are infused into our moral nature. Our outer man is gradually sloughed off *(Cf. 2 Cor. 4:16)*, as the divine life is restored within our being. The divine life of Christ becomes more and more habitual, and indissolubly our own. At length, in the glory of the resurrection, our mortal being is swallowed up in life, swallowed up in the living humanity of the great Redeemer *(Cf. 1 Cor. 15:54)*. Henceforth we have indeed our own personal selves, and yet Christ is all in all to us. The glory of Christ shines out within the body, glorifying it with all the fulness of the divine merit.

And so we are taken into the being of Christ to rejoice in God, to be filled with this very life wherewith Jesus Christ himself exults, to feel the transport of this divine exultation. There is no longer anything whatsoever to hold us back from the most perfect correspondence with the movements of that Sacred Heart; that heart which is so full of love, that head which is so full of light. Yes, in the body of Christ, he is the head who is the heart, for in the body of Christ, knowledge and love are one. Light and affection, understanding and joy,—they are one. To behold God, to know God, to love God; these are all but one expression of the life wherewith Christ lives in God, and wherewith he calls us, by living in himself, to live in God also. So contemplate the glory of this beatific life wherein we are called to live in the glorified body of Jesus Christ.

The great joy of heaven will be not merely gratitude to Jesus the Son of God for having brought us there; but an intense homage to the eternal Father, whose love it was that moved the Son of God to come and seek us out. God has become all in all to the redeemed *(Cf. 1 Cor. 15:28)*.

We shall know the glory of beholding God in our own selves; being like to God because we enshrine God, like to God because that depth of our being which now on earth sinks down into the abyss of darkness and apprehension will then be felt by us as opening out into the mysterious abyss of the divine glory. Oh, what a delight it will be, this marvel of beholding God in our own selves![34]

22. Glorifying the Father

WHAT a summary of life,—'All to the glory of God!' The purpose of man's creation is that he may glorify God. So shall he attain glory with God in the end. But if we seek glory for ourselves upon the earth, short of the glory of God, then we cannot have glory *with* God. Glorious as was the manhood of our Lord Jesus Christ, yet he would have forfeited all, had he sought for glory for himself. The whole of his own glory consisted in working out the glory of the Father. He was thus a true pattern for us.

Jesus glorified God by his obedience. It was not the display of outward miracles which constituted that glory. It was the complete surrender of his

whole being in acceptance of the Father's will which made his life so glorious.

So must we glorify God upon the earth. The weakness of the flesh does not hinder the power of the Spirit.[8]

We must consider not only our natural helplessness, but our supernatural capacity to please God. We are too apt to dwell on the worthlessness of that righteousness which is merely of the law, and to dwell too little on the righteousness which is of faith *(Cf. Rom. 9:30,31)*, whereby the power of the Holy Ghost enables us to bring forth fruit unto God. The knowledge of divine love, in which sin passes away, must result in energies of holy satisfaction.[36]

In every sphere of action, in every minute detail of life, we are either pleasing or displeasing God. We have not got to consider the result of an action, but simply the question, 'Have I served God? have I pleased God? has this act been done in God, for God, and to God alone?' We have continually to bring before us this thought; that all the acts which are done in the world have value, simply in so far as they are acts of divine service.

Our truest wisdom lies, not in the cleverness with which we understand or arrange matters, but in the simplicity with which we accept the fact that we are created to serve God, and live up to the end of our creation. We must have one simple ambition, the blessed ambition of rising up to God.[25]

God is not glorified because others know that we are glorifying him, but God is glorified because we seek to glorify him. God is not glorified because of results which come from our action, but God is glorified when he is himself recognized as the origin of all our actions. Oh what is it to live for thirty years and see what men would call no results of an active ministry! Let us learn to discipline ourselves for God's glory, and look simply up to him, and know that he is glorified, not by what we are able to effect for him upon earth, but by the change which he is effecting upon ourselves.[28]

23. Our Life in Christ

ALAS, how familiar we are with the phrase 'to have life in Christ'! How little we ponder upon the immense mysteries which that phrase involves,—its present powers, its tremendous responsibilities, its inconceivable issues![7]

All manifestations of Jesus to us are unavailing, unless these be the manifestation of Jesus within us.[1]

We are not saved just by the fact of what Christ did for us, we are saved by being taken into him. Salvation implies the attainment of all that belongs to the manhood as glorified in him.[4]

Christ Jesus is incarnate in thy humanity. Thou

must be gathered into his divinity. Think what it is to be taken out of thy fallen estate into the very Being of the incarnate God. Thou canst not live true to thy life in grace if thou art merely true to the instincts of thy fallen nature. Thou must rise up to all the marvel of the life of the incarnate God. Abiding in him, the future is already made sure to us.[28]

We have to realize how each one of ourselves in our hollowness has received the Being of the incarnate God. He was not incarnate merely that we might bow before him, but he was incarnate and lay in the manger of Bethlehem in order that his incarnate glory might be enshrined in the bodies of all his people.[34]

No one can complain that God has not given him to receive life from Christ. If thou desirest that life, thou shalt be given to Christ, and that life shall be thine. True, thou canst not come to Christ unless the Father which sent Christ draw thee by the power of the Holy Ghost *(Cf. John 6:44)*. But equally true, thou hast only to feel thy need of a Saviour, and the Holy Spirit's power shall not be wanting to thee.[8]

'By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body' *(1 Cor. 12:13)*, but our own personal responsibility is not taken away by our incorporation into Christ.

We have to abide in him, to look to him, to hold him as the head, to live true to him as his members with the obedience of faith.

His members must choose him if they are to abide in him. Christ acts as mediator towards mankind as free agents. He created us without our will, but he does not sanctify us without our will, for that would be destructive of the personality which he has given us.

A life of discipline is therefore necessary in order that we may appropriate the gifts of grace which come to us by union with his glorified humanity. We may be sure that, however great our trials may be, God gives us grace in Christ according to our necessity. There can never be any trial so great, that the grace of Christ will not be sufficient to enable us to meet it *(Cf. 2 Cor. 12:9)*. Instead of fearing the peril, we must look up with faith to call forth the grace, and 'according to our faith it shall be unto us' *(Cf. Matt. 9:29)*.[8]

The soul which has found Jesus needs nothing more, for it has found everything. All is centered in the person of that dear Lord. All the utterances of God the Father by the mouth of his Prophets pointed to the coming of God the Son in the flesh. Those mighty utterances of God are fulfilled, and they can go no further, for they lose themselves in him.

When the soul has found Jesus, it has the key to

all the mysteries of creation. Creation is an enigma which cannot be solved without Jesus Christ. He is the key to creation, and the soul which has gained him is no longer driven about hither and thither, but rests in him as the centre, to whom it naturally turns.[24]

If in death we would have life, we must now be continually dying by grace. We are not to think that Christ died in order that we might live to this world, but that we might live forever. Christ died in order that we might die along with him. Christ died in order to set us an example of death; to sanctify death for all those who die along with him.

An unmortified soul is no disciple of Jesus Christ. The soul that flies away from mortification, flies away from Christ upon the cross. The soul that flies away from mortification, flies away from the door of heaven. The more we can be like Christ, the more we find a supernatural joy.[35]

He that is not practising mortification is already dead.[35]

Our life of love must carry us to the death of Love, unto Christ. Each one of us shall then become a centre of life, from whence the eternal Life shall pass for the salvation of many souls. It is not merely as a moral power of persuasion that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church; it is as the mystic

carrying-on of the sacrifice of Christ; for that blood were shed in vain which were not offered in simple love to God, after the manner that the blood of Jesus was offered to God on Calvary. So let us understand how we are to give up our life for the brethren in the unity of the body of Christ, and in the power of the divine love; bearing indeed the reproach of the Cross, and sharing also its mysterious power.[30]

How little do we feel the identity of life which constitutes our union with Christ, and therefore we approach God in a timid, servile spirit, which is of itself a sinful contempt of our divine sonship! It should not be so. God does not act towards us in pity because Christ recommends us; God acts towards us in love, because Christ dwells in us.

So then, whatever we ask he will give to us in the Name of Christ, glorifying his Son by all he does for his Son's members. The Name of Christ summons into operation every element of divine power. We must rise up by faith to the greatness of Christ's Name wherein we speak; and God will act towards us in love, according to the fulness of the Name of his co-equal, consubstantial Son.[8]

The welcome of Christ teaches us the importance of some definite ordinance in which we may come to him. We come to him as a shelter, as a mediator, through whom we may enter into eternal life. We

need, therefore, to have him accessible in some other way than as a merely mental object. We need to be able definitely to approach him in the same simplicity of outward act in which the sick and sorrowful came to him during his earthly ministry.

The Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist makes this to be possible. Had we to approach him in his divine glory, he would be no nearer to us than the Father is. The blessedness of the invitation to come, consists in the fact of his having come down from heaven to give.[2]

Let us come to the Holy Eucharist, our Lord's sacrifice of love, and, Oh, let all of self be cast upon the altar. Let us not come to see him offered and consumed in the fire of heaven, while we ourselves remain in our own earthly nature; but let us come that the fire of the sacrifice may consume all of the earthliness in us. Let us come, asking him to burn out of our hearts all the evil that remains there; pride, self-will, dissimulation, the feeling that makes us stand aloof from others or from anything that God is making manifest to us. Let us bring it all and throw it into the divine fire, in which the body of Jesus is perpetually burning and consumed.[26]

Each communion should be, as it were, adding some fresh point to the image of Christ within our souls. As each touch of the artist adds some fresh feature to the painting, so each communion is a

touch of Christ, which should develop some fresh feature of his own perfect likeness within us.[23]

Our bodies are to be 'a living sacrifice unto God' *(Rom. 12:1)*, otherwise the sacrifice of the body of Christ will be of no avail for us. The sacrifice of Christ avails not merely as a matter of substitution, so that we may consider that he has done for us what we could not do for ourselves. It avails as a principle of transformation, so that in him we are able to do what we could not do without him. It were in vain for us to plead the sacrifice of Christ as an external sacrifice, unless we plead its ever-living power as a principle of life, raising our acts above the measure of earth, so as to be worthy of the divine acceptance.[14]

Human love is impulsive, limited, soon exhausted. Divine love is tranquil, universal, boundless. No heart has really learned to love until it has learnt to love Jesus. The love of Jesus has to be cultivated. Then it exerts its strong dominion over all the other emotions of the heart, and so leads us on to an entire conformity to him. To love Jesus above everything is that which fills the heart with an affection which nothing can possibly equal. It is not the stifling of other affections, but the infusing into them of a better life.[20]

We must not measure the risen Saviour in his

infinite glory by any apprehensions belonging to our finite condition of nature. To lose sight of him is not to lose hold of him. The hold which depends upon our natural sense is very feeble. We hold him truly because he holds us in the grasp of love which he permits us to reciprocate.[11]

In the greatest sorrows of the outer life, Jesus calls us to give ourselves to him, and he will make himself manifest to us by inward peace, or outward deliverance. Outward deliverance calls us to earthly service with renewed gratitude; but inward peace is the beginning of heaven, and an earnest of the eternal vision of the blest.[5]

What we need to do, is to do everything that comes before us with the consciousness of looking up to Jesus, knowing that all we do is of itself nothing worth; yet that each simple act of daily duty done with an eye constantly looking up to him will be multiplied in supernatural results. The great miracles of God are those which are going on day after day, and moment after moment, by which all these simple little acts are multiplied with all the dignity of the life of heaven.[36]

24. Setting our Affection on Things Above

WE are to 'set our affections on things above' *(Cf. Col. 3:2)*, we are to set our affections upon the truth. We must praise God for the truth which he has made known to us, and we must show that we know that truth as a real effective power for the transformation of our lives.

We cannot set our affection on heavenly things if we are not labouring for them. We must be acting in the simple love of God. We must be yielding all our energies up to the love of God. This it is which must call us to labour. Whithersoever we go, we must be occupied about our Father's business *(Cf. Luke 2:49)*.

We must be accustoming ourselves to look beyond immediate results, and to welcome every present failure. Whatever we labour for, we do not labour for that which we seem to the world to be labouring for. We are labouring for something the world does not see. The bodily nature will at times feel itself wearied, but the consciousness of the divine love must rouse us out of weariness to live with the life of God.

We gaze up to heaven, and we see Jesus, and in the sight of Jesus all the faculties of soul and body gather up fresh strength. We must live a life of personal devotion to Jesus at the right hand of God. To him, then, let us give up our memory, our under-

standing, our imagination, our whole being. To him let us give our toil, to him let us give every suffering of body and of mind. To him we must yield up every disappointment. To him we must give every endeavour. To him we must give ourselves up; to be held back, or to be impelled onward, and to be drawn up to him in all the power of the Holy Ghost. To give ourselves to him is to attain to behold him. And we must seek to behold him more and more, that we may yield ourselves to him the more truly.[35]

Every solemn event in life, whether of joy or of sorrow, since it brings us into the presence of the eternal, ought to make us somewhat more detached than we were before, from the ordinary surroundings of the world. The dearest of earthly ties must finally yield to death, and it is impossible that we should come to any true consciousness of the eternal Presence, without in some degree dying to the phenomena of time.[5]

We do not praise God because he has made us to triumph, but because to praise him is to triumph. However hard our lot may be, there must quicken through it the joyous life of praise overpowering the sorrow.

The life of praise is to be continually making advance; not by reason of any improvement in our circumstances in this world, but by the manifestation of Jesus going on within us.

God is praised best when the heart has nothing to praise him for but his love. Praise in success may be only a natural impulse, but the saintly soul, left alone and emptied of all other good, praises God for what He is in Himself.

We must learn to praise God, not because he subjects himself to our will, but because he subjects us to his will, and has kept us back in his wisdom from many things which we desired to our own undoing.

We must learn to utter from moment to moment that summary of praise, a dedicated life, for our life at each moment is a summary of the goodness of God to us. All good gifts of nature and all good gifts of grace we know as coming from him. We search into our inmost nature, and there again we have to praise him for his goodness in dealing out to us his own infinite love.[20]

We must seek in our own selves the hidden life of holy tranquillity; a life in which human zeal concentrates itself in the intensity of devout approach to God, a life that waits to do what God wills at the time when God appoints. It is for us to learn patiently, meekly, silently, lovingly, devoutly, to wait upon God. It may be a long, long time!

It is no token that God has forgotten us that he keeps us waiting. It is no token that God sees us to be incapable of doing his work that he keeps us waiting. God knows what we are doing, and the

greatest work God has got for any of us to do is not the work of the high places of the world but the work of retirement; the work of communion with himself, the work of the hidden life. If we are really living with God, God is developing in our hearts that energy, that power, which belongs to holy retirement. If we are living along with God, the prayers of those waiting years shall be more full of result to the world hereafter than any exercise of power belonging to the natural capacities of outward station.

So must we recognize the real power of a hidden life. We cannot be fit to enter upon our work until we have lost all thought of eagerness, until we have learned to be entirely content to wait,—waiting all the while upon God. Wait then in stillness upon God.[34]

We are waiting, not in the vacancy of an earthly dream, but in the desire of a divine nature, longing because not yet perfected, longing for Him to come who has come, in a manifestation it cannot yet declare. So shall we be perfected to follow Jesus in the mystery of a glory not yet revealed. We wait for Jesus, that where he is, there we may be also *(John 14:3)*. 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus. Come quickly' *(Cf. Rev. 22:20)*.[32]

We must be longing to behold the glory of God! Faith lives in the sunlight of the future, because it

lays hold on the substance of the things which are hoped for *(Cf. Heb. 11:1)*. Oh, do let us seek to have heaven opened to our vision! It was meant that we should gaze into heaven. It is not the prerogative of a few. How little do we realize in our worship, the glory of heaven beginning already to work in ourselves. Oh, do let us see that we come to all our devotions with more expectation, with this love of that which is beyond; let us take care that we not only expect to find heaven by and by, but to experience its power actually present now.[37]

No joy of earth can possibly compare with the expectation of Christ's appearing *(Cf. 1 Pet. 1:7)*. In that appearing every faculty of nature finds its satisfaction, and the joy which it brings can never pass away. We need to be living for it in order that we may enjoy it when it comes. It is the true joy for which our nature was formed; but as man was formed to grow to that enjoyment by the discipline of earth, he cannot expect to have the power of such enjoyment unless he be really training himself by the discipline which life on earth affords.[5]

25. Living the Life of God

ALL true glory is in the loss of that which is of self, by absorption into that which is of God.[19]

By natural life we know the things of this world

to which we naturally live. Our senses take notice of the outward phenomena of this transitory universe. The life of faith is, as it were, a sixth sense, a supernatural sense. It takes notice of all things in their relation to an unseen power. It contemplates the eternal through the veil of the phenomenal.

Life eternal consists in the capacity of apprehending God by this higher sense. It is a continuous apprehension of a continuous reality; a living receptivity corresponding with a living object of contemplation. God cannot be apprehended without a participation of divine life. To the natural sense he is unknowable; and eternal life does not consist in knowing that there is a God, but in knowing what God is. So it cannot be without love; love alone can apprehend love.[8]

We draw near to God by no mere local approach, but we draw near to God by ever-increasing assimilation. We draw near to God by having the divine nature poured into our being more and more. We become like to him, and so we draw near to behold him.

We rest upon God by having God within ourselves. We rest upon God by having God as the substance of our being. We draw near to God. We become like God. We are developed in the energies of God. We behold more and more of the glory of God. We recognize more and more of the purposes of God. We exercise more and more of the faculties

of God. We rejoice more and more with all the joy of God. And we attain to know the nature of God. This is that to which we must be continually pressing onward.

So then, let us see that we are growing in this life of the kingdom of heaven, and are thus advancing towards the true supernatural end of our being. Man was created that he might live in God. And this eternal life is given to us in Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son.[34]

The soul is perfected in the likeness of God, by being perfected in the light of God. The more we see God, the more we become like him. We must put to advantage those gifts which God has given to us. Thus must we indeed seek to grow in his likeness. We are not to think that this change can be effected within us by any sudden demonstration of divine power. But the change by which we are to be perfected in his likeness is the result of that gradual transformation which is going on while we are in the world.[30]

We ought to look to be 'changed from glory to glory' *(2 Cor. 3:18)*. We are apt to fear lest there be pride, ambition, self-righteousness; and so we are afraid to think of having attained to any glory at all. But in fact, we cannot rise out of ourselves unless we do dwell upon the thought of the divine glory which we have received. We disparage our

Christian faculties under the idea of humility; but unless we value these primary gifts of God's grace, we cannot use them aright nor advance to anything further. We ought to be expecting great things at the hands of God. We are too content to think that God will deal with us merely after the measure of human capacity and possibility.[19]

Our life in God is therefore a new sphere, wherein we possess supernatural powers. In our supernatural life we have relationships to the three Persons of the blessed Trinity, to all who in any way share this life, the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints. To this we are admitted by the new birth. We have been taken into this life of divine relationships ever since our baptism. We shall not be any more truly partakers of these relationships when we pass into another world than we are now.

Now by faith and in the power of grace, we have to be true to these relationships; appropriate them, exercise them, develop them. Hereafter the love of God will manifest whether we have lived true to these relationships or not; and whether we shall abide in their glory, or experience the shame of having fallen away from them.[15]

There can be no true life in God which does not look to God, no true life in God which does not find its real reward in the simple satisfaction of seeing him.

God formed us to love him, formed us with capacities which should be able to receive this love, and be able to use it. God poured out upon us his Holy Spirit in order that we might be able to return this love, for the Spirit of God cannot lose himself in our nature. The Spirit of God, passing through that which is finite, passes on into the Infinite; coming into man he passes through man to God. The Spirit of God cannot rest in a finite object of love. God pours forth his love upon man, to receive that love back again. He raises man to infinite glory by pouring out upon him His love, and man has no choice but to love the Being who is worthy of all love and is the centre of all love. All love comes from him, and flows back to him.

Thus do our affections rise up towards God in the fulness of the power of the Holy Spirit. We are taken up into the life of Christ to find our joy in pouring forth all our being in the contemplation of God. The love which God has to us bears us up, so that we may love him in return, and loving him there is no longer anything we can care to love, there is no longer anything we can hunger after. To be satisfied with that love is to have passed out of all decay, out of all weariness, out of all disappointment. To have entered into that satisfaction is to have entered into the sustenance of life which makes us secure to all eternity.[30]

Eternal life includes every anticipation of glory

and honour which the regenerate soul can form; and, more than that, it finds its consummation in the perfect oneness with almighty God into which we shall be gathered when 'we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is' *(1 John 3:2)*.[14]

26. Prayer and Contemplation

PRAYER is often taught to be the preparation for work, and work is regarded as the end of prayer; but it is more truly the other way round. The end of life is prayer, and work is the preparation for it.[20]

Our work must be begun, continued, and ended in converse of the soul with Jesus. Oh, blessed intervals of the soul's life! We cannot complain that we have nothing to do when we always have Jesus with us. How can it hurt to wait here or there, if Jesus is with us? Oh, we must strive to learn this blessedness![32]

Better that the spiritual life should be slow, than that our spiritual life should seem to grow, while the life of prayer in us was not being perfected. Let us ever pray to be perfected in the spirit of prayer, and so wait the Lord's time, that the life of prayer, which was the life of Jesus, may be deepened and perfected in us, and that we may find our eternal reward in this simple life of prayer.[25]

God appointed prayer as the means whereby we may obtain all we want, not because he could not give it without our asking, not because he was ignorant of what were our needs, not because he had any delight in our formal homage; but because he desired by forming in us this habit of prayer to draw us to look to himself as the fountain of all good.[31]

The prayer which we make to God is not a mere matter of experiment. We pray with confidence and certainty, knowing that we do certainly receive our answers from God. Prayer knows no impediment. Prayer is a power which abides. Prayer triumphs over everything. There can be no uncertainty,—we have the word, the promise of God.

So then we must take care when we pray to God to be sure to pray with a confident spirit. If we pray for earthly things, still we pray with this confident spirit; for if we obtain not that earthly thing for which we pray, we certainly obtain its better counterpart. God permits us to have the desire of earthly things in order to obtain heavenly things. He may not give the earthly things just in order that we may obtain the heavenly things,—and so answers those prayers.[30]

Looking to God is the work of prayer, a work that cannot fail, a work that can be carried out under all circumstances. We need only a loving heart looking up to God, in order to accomplish that

which is the real purpose of our being. Let us be content with the manifold failure of earthly results; but let us be constant in always looking up to God, so as not to fail of the divine result. Earnestness of prayer must reach out to lay hold on God.

God is continually giving us gifts; but we do not understand that they come from God, and we take them as if they were merely natural results. We take them, and forget God. The habit of prayer opens the eye of the soul to be watchful for God's love, to recognize his hand in his gifts. So the habit of prayer must bring with it a capacity for seeing God, for seeing his hand in everything. When we are really able to see things as a result of God's love, we say, 'Oh, this has come in answer to prayer; God in his love has given me this,—whether trouble or joy,—because I prayed.' Our eyes are opened, and what seemed trouble becomes joy.

A life of prayer then is a life of love. The world prays that it may get what it wants; the faithful pray in order that they may give themselves to God. The life of prayer sees the glory of God resting upon all things,—things insignificant shine with the brightness of divine love.[42]

We must pray in accordance with the will of God; that is, in accordance with that law of prayer which our Lord Jesus Christ has given to us. We must always pray in subordination to that, seeking to desire nothing unless it be for the hallowing of

God's Name, for the coming of his kingdom, for the accomplishment of his will, for the perfecting and pardon of his saints, for the supply of every necessity, and for our own deliverance from all forms of evil. All our prayers must be subjected to this general law of prayer. These are sufficient to carry any weight of desire we may be pleased to put upon them. But no desire can roll into heaven upon any other wheels than these.

As we pray for ourselves, so must we pray for one another. We cannot abide in the presence of God and merely think of *our* needs, and seek to obtain *their* supply. As our life in the world is a life of holy love which must be continually embracing those around us in its holy energies, so our life of prayer before almighty God must be a life of intercession; and if we would obtain any gift for ourselves, we must seek that same gift for our brethren according to their need.[30]

In praying for others, we learn really and truly to love them. As we approach God in their behalf, we carry the thought of them into the very Being of eternal love; and as we go into the Being of him who is eternal love, so we learn to love whatever we take with us there.[22]

To call God 'our Father' is indeed to come before God and ask for everything that his children can possibly want. It is to come before God and put

forward a claim which will bring down every thing whereby our wants can be supplied. It is more than this. It is to acknowledge that we have no want of anything; for if we know that he is our Father, what more can we want?[31]

Remember that the first step towards obtaining what you ask, is that the Lord's Name may be hallowed in you *(Cf. Matt. 6:9)*. People do so often make that the last petition, instead of the first. But the order of the petitions in the Lord's Prayer is as important as the subjects of the petitions. Before God can grant us any petition, even the conversion of a heathen country, he must have his Name hallowed in us by our prayer. We must have our hearts identified with his will, and that chiefly by learning to wait. Those must wait the longest to whom God means to give the most.[19]

The Name of Christ avails to obtain all our prayer, while the life of Christ is manifest in our actions. Do we point to the Crucified and say, 'For Jesus' sake, hear us'? He points to our hearts to ask if the Crucified is there. In vain we look to the Cross of history, or to a cross of imagery, if there be not a cross of life within us. If the Crucified be not the living law of sonship within our hearts, what part have we in his redemption?[31]

We do not pray for the sake of sweetness, but in order to attain to God. We cannot attain to God

without submitting to his will. And we cannot submit to his will without sacrificing our own will.[29]

We never can live upon the nourishment of the past. Nor can we live in the sanctity of the past. We need the continual communication of the sanctifying energy of the Spirit which is in Christ. And so we must come to God day by day, remembering that we need God's sustaining care moment by moment. We may grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we can *live* in this knowledge only while we live in entire dependence on God, seeking support from him. So let us ask God to 'give us this day our daily bread' *(Matt. 6:11)*. 'Today,'—that is, that which we need for the moment. The worldly heart looks forward to riches in the future, but he that lives in eternity lives in the moment. The eternity of God is the unchangeable moment.[31]

Another law of all our prayers is this: that whenever we ask God to give us anything, we must always ask him to prepare us to receive. God constantly answers our prayers, we may be sure, and the answer comes before us, but we see it not because our eyes are blinded by sin. Constantly do we pray to God, and not a prayer fails of bringing down the answer, but we remain as if God had not answered, because we remain sinners as we were before. It is of no use for us to receive any amount of God's gifts, temporal

or spiritual, unless while we receive them we become more conformed to his likeness,—more truly perfected in his holiness. This, then, is a great law of prayer, a great purpose of prayer; that we must ask God to forgive our sins, that we, by our prayer, may grow in the holiness of God.[31]

The object of prayer is that we be transformed into the Being of God. If the Spirit thus lifts us up and transforms us, then we come to desire the things which God desires. It may be that we begin our prayer with a strong desire for something which God does not deign to give us. As we pray we cease to desire it, we are perfected in the desire of the divine will, we become one with God and desire nothing but what he appoints. Wonderful is that answer to prayer, when there is accomplished, not our own will for ourselves, but God's will in us.

The Holy Ghost must lift us up. He lifts us up towards God, because the eternal Father is the object to which he is continually tending. By his own eternal property he is ever proceeding from the Father to the Son, and returning from the Son to the Father. He now dwells in the humanity of Christ, but he cannot depart from this law of the divine life. So by the divine law of action of his Being, he lifts up the manhood of the Son and presents it to the Father.

As he takes us up into that Manhood, so he carries us up also with this irrepressible tendency, which is

nothing else but the eternal flow of the stream of eternal love, towards the Father, who is the fount of all love. So it is that the Holy Ghost really lifts us up. In our prayer, if we would just trust ourselves to the blessed Spirit of God, we should find ourselves carried on into the very presence of the Father.[36]

If we would learn to pray, we must live in the presence of God, conscious of his love which streams down upon us. The simple words 'I love thee' contain the purpose and substance of all meditation. Meditation is valueless unless we learn truly to speak these simple words. The whole essence of the Christian life consists in the words 'I love Thee.' We draw near to God continually to be taught by the power of the Spirit to love him more and more as his own true children.

O Lord Jesus Christ, teach me to love thee! That is the one purpose of all our prayer, the one purpose of all our actions, the one purpose of all our life,—love, divine love, childlike love for God. Divine love in all the maturity of heavenly power shall be the glory of the loving soul through all eternity.[42]

We know that God wants to show himself to us. Oh, it is often blessed to end a meditation with the simple desire,—'Lord, show me thy glory!'[1]

No prayer reaches to God that does not rise up to him in the power of the Holy Ghost; and no prayer

can be really inspired by the Holy Ghost which stops short in any aim of personal aggrandisement, and thus fails to lose itself in the desire for God's glory.[5]

We sometimes think that our prayers fail because we ask too much, but they fail because we ask too little. Do we think that God will be willing to give us a little and not much; that we do not deserve much, and so it is of no use asking for much? If so, our prayers must fail, for we deserve *nothing*. We must make our prayers large-hearted, as were the prayers of Jesus. We must gather all, as far as we can, into our prayers, and believe that we can obtain all from God,—for all is God's. And our prayers must be persevering. We often fail in our prayers because we do not persevere.[24]

How much we lose by saying our prayers as if we were the only, or at any rate the principal objects by whom God should be addressed. In all our prayers we ought to feel ourselves to be addressing God, not merely in the feebleness of our own individual hearts, but in the Presence of the divine Majesty, and with all the company of heaven round about.

If we would call forth God's power in prayer, we ought to recognize God's majesty, that he may be glorified before the holy angels by granting what we pray for.[44]

Jesus lived in the contemplation of God. Let us seek to be associated with him in this life of contemplation, that our contemplative life may be illuminated by his.

Let us, like Jesus, dedicate our whole lives to the love of God and mankind; and like him be content to wait, cultivating the powers of the soul, restraining the impulses of our heart by the law of God. How little, alas, we know of the light and love in which Jesus dwelt. And why? Because our nature is so ready to effervesce in outward acts. Let us learn to love mankind simply in the power of the love whereby we love the Father.

In our waiting times, let us learn to abide patiently. How many waiting times we have! Let us ask, have we during those times been looking up to God? Are we seeking to realize in ourselves something of that which distinguished the waiting time of Jesus? If so, we shall not regret the time, or think it lost. God's love has been with us all the while, streaming down constantly upon our souls.

In these busy days, although our lives may not be given up to pure contemplation, we ought to dwell often upon the thought of the hidden life, the reality of the relationship God has established between himself and us, the glory of a life accepted by God.

We are very apt to think that we shall attain to spiritual experience by practical work, but spiritual experiences are given to us by God in times of waiting and times of suffering. It is thus that he teaches

us to what we are called, and enables us increasingly to praise him for having gathered us into the supernatural life.

Those will do their work in the world best, who know most fully their life hidden with Christ in God *(Cf. Col. 3:3)*.[26]

O Jesu, in thee let me live, ever contemplating the perfections of thy love! If I can grow to the measure of thy stature, then wilt thou be manifested to me in the illimitable glory of thy Godhead.[4]

27. Recollection

PRAYER is an art which must be acquired, though taught by the Holy Ghost. The habit of prayer is a virtue acquired by continual exercise of the faculty of prayer, we must therefore seek to grow continually in the power of prayer. The accidents and necessities of everyday life blow the flame of our life hither and thither, but it always recovers its own steadfast tendance to God in prayer. If any human accident diverts it for a moment from its true direction, when that is withdrawn, it must once more rise up like a pure column of flame to God.

We must learn to pray in fellowship with the heart and mind of Jesus. Prayer should be no mere daily task, but the exercise of divine grace which Christ is pleased to communicate to us. Prayer, far from wearying, ought indeed to lift us up.[29]

We cannot bear witness to God save by living in him. The more we are hidden from the world in him, the more will he use us as his instruments for making himself known to the world. We are so slow to grasp the real power of hiddenness in God; and yet our own efforts, although we fancy they are on behalf of God, are so much more apt to obscure the divine self-manifestation than to bring people to acknowledge the truth. The struggle of reason with reason is but the clash of arms,—often bringing death, not life; but the conversion of souls is by the Breath of the living God, touching upon the hearts that are dead that they may live; if we are to breathe forth this life, we must be breathing it ourselves by constant prayer.[19]

This is what we have to seek for in our mental prayer; to live with God in this fellowship of calm divine love, by which we may hear the voice of the living God speaking within ourselves, and we ourselves may speak with him in the power of the Holy Ghost.[23]

We are often weary in the intellectual part of meditation, but in the exercise of love the soul finds a repose,—it finds strength.[21]

Our life must learn to rise up into a habitual silence for the contemplation of God. This is the silence of holy love. Love never is so intense as when

it is silent. In the silence of holy love we pour out our whole being to God. Words gratify our consciousness, but in silence we surrender up ourselves to God to live before him; we listen for the voice of God; we act in the power of God; we welcome the manifestation of God. In the simple waiting upon God there is the greatest attainment of the creature.[29]

Our desire is 'Lord, show me thy glory' *(Exod. 33:18)*. This is the one longing of the soul which has retired from the world unto the mountain of contemplation. Man was formed for the revelation of God. The contemplation of God is the beginning of holiness of life. He will speak in proportion as we are faithful to him.[28]

People are very apt to think that such high contemplations as are really worthy of the Christian Faith must unsettle us, and make us unfit for the routine of daily life. But really, who is fit for the routine of daily life unless he is living in the power of the eternal verities? How are we to meet the changeful events and difficulties of the day unless we are living in the unchangeable glory of the Lord?[31]

We may give up ourselves to a dream, and be what men call 'absent-minded,' but this is not being with God, for being with God is being intensely present; present where we are, as God is present where we are; present to things round about us

with that intense consciousness that belongs to God. Recollectedness with God, therefore, is no dreamy unfitness for natural duties, or for simple actions of ordinary interest.[23]

We are not to think of a life of contemplation as if it were a tranquil life borne upon the wings of a dove *(Cf. Ps. 55:6)*, to abide in joyous vision and be at rest in God. There can be no rest except in proportion to the struggle, no vision except in proportion to the purification of heart, no purification except in proportion as the agony of satanic conflict squeezes out the life-blood of our corrupt nature. The spiritual deadness of a contemplative vocation can only be attained by the spiritual activity of divine love; not a sentiment, but an energy; not gained by dreaming but by suffering, suffering both of mind and body, accepted in the power of the Holy Ghost. We, through the Spirit, must mortify the deeds of the body *(Cf. Rom. 8:13)*. So does contemplation strengthen for martyrdom. The vision of the Son of Man at the right hand of God prepared the first martyr for his death *(Cf. Acts 7:56)*. Such saints are called to contemplation, as a spiritual joy and supernatural fellowship with God.

We are not to think that we have no need to consider the contemplative life, because we are not called to pure contemplation. No form of the active life can be truly spiritual without contemplation. All else is accidental. It is the contemplative life,

gazing up to God and doing battle with Satan, which is the essential characteristic of all Christian life.[15]

We are to be very careful to rise up to this higher work,—the effort of the divine love, and that we rise to it with such simplicity as to find in it our real repose. We may weary upon the wing if we are beating upon the air of the lower world, but we cannot be weary if we are being absorbed into the glory of God. The soul of the faithful rises as naturally into the Being of God as the body sinks to the centre of gravity.

Our prayer is the best when it is most full of repose, when it is perfectly tranquil in the calmness of the Being of God; when it does not feel itself to be striving after God, but when it is brought to God, as it were, in spite of itself. It knows not why or how, it finds itself transported into God. There is a blessed calmness which has taken possession of the soul. The soul is lifted up from the earth. The soul goes forward then, seeking to be guided it knows not where. It goes, ever gazing upon the glory of him that called it. It is the Breath of God which holds up the soul, which soothes the soul and fills it with the gladness of divine joy, such as no words can tell. So we should give ourselves up to be passive, as far as may be, in the power of the Holy Spirit of God.

If we are anxious to feel the joy of loving God,

we shall never feel it; for that is no true love. We love God truly when we love him without any desire of joy in loving him. If we are thinking back upon ourselves, to see whether or no it be a pleasure to us, that is not loving. We must give ourselves quite passively into the hands of God, watching for the glory of God to shine out; as the traveller may watch for some beacon upon a distant hill to be kindled.

So it is with the pilgrim who is watching in prayer for the truth of God. He may often be weary. He may often begin almost to despair. He watches; and at last God makes the light of his truth to shine out with the glory of the fire of heaven. It speaks to him now with all the power of the world to come. For none are disappointed who thus wait upon God. Many are kept a long time waiting, but he that endureth to the end shall see the light. Oh then, it is just for us to wait simply and passively upon God.

Listen for God. It rests with God to show his glory to you.[21]

28. Unanswered Prayer — Disappointment

PRAYER is the habit of communion with God by which we recognize his sovereignty. The value of prayer does not consist in our getting something from God; but in our gaining a hold upon God himself by the habit of mind which is generated within us by his bounty in supplying our needs.

People fail in getting answers to prayer because they think of the answer, and not of the communion with God.[45]

We must not think that God cannot, or will not, answer any prayer because he seems to let it go by. Remember that every prayer, prayed in union with our Lord, has stirred the depths of the divine Heart, and is treasured there for an eternal response. Oh wait, and you shall find the answer; if not now in this present time, then on the eternal shores of paradise,—the answer of peace! Learn thus to live in the spirit of the life of prayer, as the unceasing, the habitual attitude of the soul's being.[25]

Be sure that what we ask, we *have*. Our prayers may seem to pass away without result, but let us be sure we *have* that for which we have prayed. Our prayers go ringing on in the ear of God till they are accomplished in the gifts of eternity. There is not one that we have ever uttered that has not its true and abiding consciousness in the blessedness of eternal life.[26]

Blessed are those prayers which seem to have no answer, if they really obtain for us more worthy penitence, more trustful patience, more spiritual contemplation. But results such as these will surely come if we are praying through the mediation of Christ.[8]

We must learn to accept the discipline of love if Jesus does not give us sensible tokens of his presence. He may give to some the sweet interior delight of converse with himself; he may give outward evidence of co-operation by success in what is entrusted to us.

But it is a higher law of love by which he says:—'Rest in me. Those find my love most truly whose life is hidden with me in God, hidden from others, hidden from themselves *(Cf. Col. 3:3)*. Measure not my love by thine experience; but as thou hast ministered to me and hast seen me passing by, be content to see me no more until thou pass away, so as to see me in my glory and abide with me forever.' Thus must the faithful soul learn to live in God's love by the discipline of hiddenness.[15]

We must not think that we can ever command the vision of God. It will come to us at his own time, it may be longer or shorter, but if we watch for it, it will certainly illuminate our understanding. It is a great thing when the understanding is illuminated, even to behold the *possibility* of the divine light, and to see that we are dark, and that we need its power.

When through God's grace we are conscious of darkness, when we know that there is something wanting in us, and what that is, we have made the first step. Instead of being disheartened that we do not experience the illumination that we long for, we should be very thankful that we do long for it,

and that we know our need. If we are living in the love of Jesus, he will reveal the truth to us.[26]

Blessed is that discipline of disappointment by which the heart is purged, so that it shall rejoice to contemplate nothing but the glory of God.[3]

29. Suffering and Joy

THE infinite is not the mere enlargement of the finite. It is a contradictory form of being. God in assuming our nature chose to act under a form which, in the very nature of things, involved suffering; for it was a limitation of the divine glory, and therefore every faculty of the nature so assumed had to feel the strain of the supernatural.

That strain was the preliminary to that glorification wherein the manhood of Christ now exults. The suffering which comes to us in the discipline of faith is, in like manner, a preparation for us to share the future glory.[10]

We live in the kingdom of Christ, which by his sufferings has been called into life. In it the divine glory has been manifested, not by triumphs of earthly splendour, but by the endurance of suffering saints from age to age, testifying to the divine life wherein the glorified Saviour has called them to live with himself.

Are we seeking to attain to this glory? Are we looking to live that the Son of Man may be glorified in us? Are we living in the confidence that we shall be glorified in God as the members of his incarnate Son?

What are the years of our earthly life in comparison with that glory? *(Cf. Rom. 8:18)* They are but a brief moment after all. But during that moment we must live with the life of God if the eternal glory is to follow.[7]

'For the joy that was set before him,' Jesus endured the cross *(Heb. 12:2)*. So must we bear all the discipline of God. Our sufferings do not come to us because God has withdrawn his loving purpose, but because we need them in order to be fitted for that purpose.[8]

If we could have loved God in some better way than by suffering, Jesus would have chosen that better way. Oh, it is sweet to suffer, since Jesus has suffered! Suffering is no transitory trouble. Suffering is, to the faithful in Jesus Christ, the very beginning of eternal joy. Suffering makes life sweet by expectation. Death sums up all the sweet hopes of life, and admits the faithful to the secure possession of that which they have desired.[41]

Bodily suffering is one of the best ways of rising up to God, and we become fitted to speak of the

transfigurating life just in proportion as we have been taken into the cloud. In so many ways, 'the day of the LORD is darkness, and not light' *(Amos 5:18)*. It is darkness which prepares us, darkness which preserves us, darkness which perfects us. Illuminations are very untrustworthy. If we have eyes to see the darkness, it is much better for us. Light 'cometh in the morning' *(Cf. Ps. 30:5)*; and darkness may be of bodily weakness, or outward suffering and necessity of body, or spiritual temptation, or absence of comfort and joy and divine consciousness. Eye salve prepares the eye to see, but blinds it for a time. So the discipline of earth and the gifts of grace darken for a while; but they fit us for the vision that shall be.[19]

Christ comes in the fulness of personal power, but he comes especially to make his grace manifest under circumstances of personal incapacity in those who are ready to receive it. We never fail of glorifying Christ by reason of weakness, but only by reason of misused strength.

It is not weakness or incapacity, but sin, which hinders God. Weakness, if it be sanctified, tends especially to glorify him.

This ought to be the cause of constant encouragement, and of warning that we may not trust in human capacity, but may look always upward for divine strength, with an especial expectation that God's permanent victory will be accomplished in us

just in those points where we seem to be most incapable of doing anything.[4]

Sickness and weakness are a great blessing, both in the endurance of them, and in the issue to which they lead. It is a blessed thing to give ourselves to God in our weakness, feeling that we can do nothing, and yet sure that we are just as acceptable to him by his grace as if we had command of every worldly capacity. The discipline of weakness trains us for what is really a much harder phase of probation,—the discipline of strength. When we have learnt that we can do all though we can do nothing, we are fit to go on to the more difficult lesson of faith, that we can do nothing when we can do all.[18]

It is not a self-righteous asceticism, or a philosophic indifference, which enables us to bear pain in a manner acceptable to God. The cheerful, penitential endurance of pain must be a manifestation to the world of the love which we have to God. God indeed can read the heart, but in this world we have to show forth the love which inspires all true sacrifice, and that too, a love to the Father, not merely a love to some earthly aim of our own hearts. The Father's commandment has to be recognized as the cause of all true and loving oblation.

How it does tend to strengthen us to meet all troubles, if we feel that we can thereby show forth our love to God! The greatest agonies lose their

sting under the healing influence of loving self-sacrifice to God, and the smallest inconveniences gain a dignity which elevates the whole life if they are accepted with a view to the divine glory.[7]

The pains of a long-continued bodily infirmity pass away; but the spiritual gifts which have been thus acquired linger on in capacities of resurrection life, which are given to us in him whose Cup we are permitted to share. Human nature is apt to formulate various expressions of regret for human suffering which we and those we love may have to bear; but divine sonship speaks in our hearts with an increasing response to the fatherly love which permits us by any suffering to gain an increasing anticipation of the glory which awaits us as members of the Crucified. We know that we are being purified by a Father's love for the glory which shall not fail us in the end.[18]

How many things God manifests to us in sickness which otherwise we could not learn! As we have to go into the dark to see some bright object; so it is in the darkness of outward suffering that we catch the first glimpses of the Light that is better than that of earth. Yet we are not unlike children who are afraid when the room is darkened, although eager to see what shall be shown them. So we are often fearful and cast down as we enter into the darkness, the cloud preparing for a transfiguration glory *(Cf. Luke 9:34)*.

We must not be worried if we find it so, for in fact this is the very necessity of darkness. A darkness which was not felt would be no real darkness.

The darkness, whether it overflow the body or the mind, is no darkness with God *(Cf. Ps. 139:12)*. It is a great blessing when God leads us on the way of faith to experience his sustaining power. Gleams of joy shine out, brighter and brighter.[18]

God is full of joy in his own life by reason of the perfect relationships in which the divine nature acts eternally. God makes that joy known to us as we contemplate him in the power of the Holy Ghost. To see his joy, however imperfectly, is our highest joy.[1]

If God is thine end, learn every day how he is leading thee onward to the fruition of himself. Day by day seek nothing else but God, and thou shalt find the all-sufficiency of his joy throughout eternity. Hide thyself in him, and his glory shall fill thy heart with praise.[17]

If we would really share the joy of the resurrection, we must accept it as a true solace for all times of suffering. As we are Christ's members, we must own the power of his resurrection working within us, while we are made conformable to his death *(Cf. Phil. 3:10)*. As suffering and death are the porch through which we pass to joy, we must find the

power of love strengthening us in all suffering to feel the sympathy of his presence. He who has not shared the cross cannot share the resurrection. The resurrection strengthens us with sympathetic love to bear the cross. The risen Lord sympathizes with us in our sorrow. We in our sorrow find ourselves transported out of all unworthy self-contemplation. Love forgets self. Love sees Jesus in his glory. Love feels, in spite of every outward pain, the glory and joy of the Beloved.[11]

Every form of trouble shall have its specialty of reward in the life which is to come. Pains pass away from the children of God; the glory which they effect abides for ever.[1]

30. Hope

IT is probable that one of the great reasons of the decay of modern Christianity is the loss of the great supernatural virtue of hope. People act by a false humility which Satan teaches, disparaging themselves, until at last they cannot suppose that God can do anything more for them. Even while we look at our own misery we are always to be looking up to the divine glory; the active, loving glory of God communicating itself to us and transforming us, so that we shall take our present existence to be no test whatever of what we are to be.

We are then to be undertaking all our work with

an entire absence of merely natural expectation, but with a great fulness of supernatural hope. We do not rely upon earthly instrumentality to do the work, but we rely upon the power of God to strengthen us for it. We do not rely upon or look for earthly results to crown the work, but we look for the glory of God to be its abundant recompense.

We must see then that we do cultivate this virtue of holy hope; a hope of that which is to be in the end, and hope of every intermediate step as conducing to that end. It matters not at all what we have got to do if our hope is really fixed in heaven. We must be of those 'who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality *(Rom. 2:7)*.

We are often, it may be, discouraged in battling with sin. The only way to meet our discouragement is by the exercise of hope. We have to battle with some great temptation; well, we must make an act of hope, of hope in the glorious power of God, of hope that though I find myself now to be so feeble, yet when the moment of trial comes, God will give me strength. We are to meet temptations in hope of the power of Jesus. Our life must be a life of continual hope.[21]

We ought to keep our hearts constantly fixed on what is beyond this life. This is what our Lord did. He did not go through his life of sacrifice, his dark life of sorrow, as a terrible necessity to be lived

through gloomily and sternly, but he knew that in glorifying the Father he received from the Father the fulness of love; and so amid the darkness of the present moment he looked onward to the revelation of the coming joy, to the shining of the true light. He looked forward to the joy set before him through the fulfilment of his Father's will *(Cf. Heb. 12:2)*.

Thus did he ever look forward to being with God in his glory, and to the revelation of that glory to those for whom he was labouring and suffering on earth.

We must always bear in mind, then, this thought of this contemplation of the future glory which was ever the sustaining power in the divine mind of Jesus.

Thus we are to contemplate that glorious hope which stimulated and sustained our blessed Lord throughout his suffering life on earth. We are so apt to look forward to an *earthly* future,—why should we? How little do we know what may be near us, yes, even at our very doors! How little do we know what in a few short years may be our condition! We have nothing to do with the future of our earthly life, we can know nothing about it, but we should look on to that paradise of certainty, and of ecstasy of joy. We should learn to bear every sorrow and suffering of earth, even as our blessed Lord submitted himself to a life of suffering, in the full deep consciousness, the perfect confidence, that the heavenly joy will not be withheld from us

if we are but faithful in the sufferings of the present time *(Cf. Rom. 8:18)*. Let us rise to the full measure of our vocation in the confidence of loving hope.

We have to keep this thought before us, that if we persevere we also shall be glorified with all the saints. Our Lord shall change and perfect us now, from day to day, from glory to glory, until perfected in the fulness of his likeness, we shall take our place in that home which he has prepared for us *(Cf. John 14:2)*, until we are sanctified, transformed, perfected in him.

Let, then, the glory that shall be strengthen us for whatever trial and suffering may be in store for us. Think of the love wherewith our Lord has loved us! Think of the glory which is in store for us, think of the joy that is set before us! *(Cf. Heb. 12:2)*

Let us follow Christ in simple hope and trust through bodily pain, through spiritual trial and sorrow, through the deep dark temptations by which loving souls are tried and proved. The night is but for a time, the darkness shall depart, the day shall dawn in the fulness of its perfect light *(Cf. Rom. 13:12)*. See, it comes in all its glory! It shall be ours, our very own, to enter into all its wondrous brightness.[25]

The unity which awaits us is certain, it is the great fact! We ought to have an intense expectation, that we may make progress towards it. We ought to

have a holy hope bringing this nearer to our apprehension. Though our imagination dare not unravel its mysteries, nor our reason reach into its laws, yet faith must accept its truth, and the Holy Spirit of God enable us to appreciate that truth, though it be beyond our understanding, though it surpasses all human imagination with full rapture of divine love. Meditate on this Union, a union which is the perfect realization of our Lord's prayer:—'That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us;' 'that they may be one, even as we are one' *(John 17:21,22)*. Look forward to that gathering of the redeemed into the oneness of the divine life.

We shall be taken into the fulness of the divine life, the whole immensity of the divine Being filling our being. So think of becoming one with God, but not losing our individuality and personality while absorbed into the oneness of the divine nature; one act binding the two together, an act simple, spiritual, pure, so that the giver and receiver become absolutely identified in the joy thereof.[37]

Heaven is the consummation of the work of God, the realization of the divine perfection; and if we rejoice with a holy joy and hope, we join in the joy of the eternal Father welcoming the soul which he has created into the courts of paradise. This earth is a place of labour and discipline, of sorrow and suffering; that paradise of God is the participation

in all its fulness of the glorious and infinite energies of the divine love of God.

Oh, what will it be to love God with a perfect love, even as he loves us with a perfect love! Not as it now is, love repressed under the heavy, dull crust of earthly faculties, love bowed down with all the infirmities and weakness of the flesh; but with love in its perfection, thrilling through every pulse of our perfected being, love penetrating our inmost soul with all the fulness of the love of God. God loving us, we loving God with an infinite response of love. God all in all; ourselves lost in the ocean of eternal love![25]

31. Death and Judgement

HOW much do people miss of the strength which should be derived from contemplating heaven because they do not rise beyond the thought of their own unworthiness! But we ought to remember that the Body of Christ is worthy of that glory to which the Church is to aspire, and that we hope to attain it, not by individual fitness, but by losing ourselves in the glory of that Body whose members we are. We were not worthy of the grace which we have received, but that grace does make us worthy of the glory for which we hope. It is the very beginning of that glory. In the power of its present communications we are to strive after its final attainment.[4]

We fear to leave this world because our nature is so befogged by sin that we cannot see the eternal glories to which we are called.[3]

Contemplate death as the call of God, calling thee that thou mayest behold himself. At death the Word of God will speak through thy being no new call; the call will be only the carrying-out of that voice which has been speaking within thee throughout thy life. The soul was not intended merely to animate the body for a few years, but to prepare the body for eternal life.

Meditate, then, upon the call of God in death. The soul which during life has felt within itself an emptiness, condemning itself because it came so short of the divine will, yet sustained by faith in the divine love which still was calling it,—that soul finds in this final call of God an intensity of delight, the sweetness of the divine manifestation.[28]

Are we prepared to die? Is our life a real preparation for death? Consider that it is still possible for thee to die the death of a saint. It is still possible for thee to attain to this glory of God. Think not with thyself what thou hast been in the past, but realize the attraction of this heavenly light shining upon thee. There is the voice of impulse from within, and there is the voice of welcome from the other side of the grave. There is the illumination of the image of God within, and there is the glory of

Him for whom thou preparest beyond the grave. Thou art indeed to be encouraged, thou art not to despair. 'This is the will of God, even your sanctification' *(1 Thess. 4:3)*. The Word of God will take possession of thee if thou wilt let him. The Word of God can fashion all thy actions day by day if thou wilt. The Word of God can bear thee onward constantly if thou wilt; for he is calling thee. The voice of him that called thee out of nothingness is calling thee still. The call will not cease until thou hast attained to him that speaks. So then realize that it is still possible for thee to die a saint.

The saints are not those who take their part in some great crisis of the world's history, but those who have been able to bear the crisis of their own history. Thou must bear the crisis of thine own history, and die as a saint. Saints have received great grace from God. Hast *thou* not received the Holy Ghost, the giver of all grace? If we are to die as saints, we must be living in the Spirit of God.[28]

Many a one who is willing to labour for God is very far from trusting his work to God, and he shrinks from death as if the work must fail when he is gone. Let us learn from our Lord Jesus Christ to commend our work with a real confidence to the Father's love. Let us seek entire detachment and be ready to be called away, and our work to be dealt with just as God pleases. Whatever he began, he will carry out to the perfection he sees fit. It is only

the works of earth which cannot afford to die. 'I give up all my work to thee my God. Let me see it all collapse if it be thy will. Let it die to the world, and let the world scorn it; but let it live on in thy love and have eternal life in thy acceptance.'[26]

To prepare for death, live constantly in the love of God, watching for the appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Our hearts should be constantly rising up with the welcome, 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus' *(Rev. 22:20)*. We can attain to the fitness for heaven only by the power of divine love, and that love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost *(Rom. 5:5)*. Outward rules may break us away from the world, but it is only love which perfects us in God. We must ask him to teach us more and more to love himself. What are we waiting for in the world? We are only waiting until we have attained more love. We must know this as all-sufficient,—'Whom have I in heaven but thee?' *(Ps. 73:25)*.[18]

The soul coming into the divine presence comes to find the fulness of the action of almighty God. It is received into that world with approbation or with disavowal by the personal act of almighty God. Oh, what will it be to undergo this scrutiny! And yet we must undergo it. As we pass out of this world we must be judged. The full powers of God, the fulness of the glory of God, must be exerted in judgement upon us.

Think then of finding thyself in the revealed presence of almighty God, the divine Word speaking to thee, and by his utterance manifesting the exact amount of thy conformity to his all-holy will. Oh, the revelation of God to the soul in all the fulness of his glory must indeed bring the soul to an intense consciousness of sin, such as it has never had before.

Even now we form some conjecture of what sin is, but these conjectures at best are very feeble. Then we shall see sin in all its hatefulness, then we shall see sin as God sees it. For to see God is to see all that is opposed to God. To see God in his truth is to see the error of all that is opposed to him. So the soul will be most ready to condemn itself. It will not shrink from this condemnation,—for it cannot shrink. It must accept the condemnation. It stands convicted. There it is in the full sunlight of the truth of God. The soul will see itself and its sin, and it will hate itself. It will no longer love the sin to which it has given way. It will hate the sin to which, in former times, it yielded itself a willing captive.[28]

God speaks to us day by day, calling us on to increasing holiness, until we can bear the fulness of his utterance at the moment of the particular judgement. Let us thus understand how day by day we are moving on towards the judgement of almighty God. Day by day we have to be advancing in holiness. Day by day we have to be purifying

ourselves by increasing penitence; until we rise unto that consummate act of penitence in which we shall utterly disavow ourselves before God, acknowledging ourselves simply guilty, while, at the same time, our iniquity is purged away forever. May our penitence purify our souls day by day![28]

32. Things Temporal and Things Eternal

(Three Meditations)

I. 1 The changeableness of things around.

HOW can I live for a world that is so full of change? Whatever I desire is changed before I can acquire it. Open my eyes, O Lord, to see the short-lived character of earthly things! They must fail me in the end. Let them not deceive me while I am eager to gain them. Show me that which abideth, that in contrast with the eternal, I may learn to repudiate what must so quickly pass away. How am I carried away down the stream of time, while I think myself holding to something quite immoveable Alas, I see others deceived, and yet I am deceived myself! Time will not stay for me,—but eternity awaits me. What I gain may carry me with itself unwittingly to destruction. I cannot hold anything back. All round about me must perish. O teach me to keep myself aloof from all. Yes, from all, and for thee, the never-changing God, my soul's true end.

2 The changeableness of self.

HOW greatly do I change within myself, so that the things which I desired a while ago soon cease to please me! Nothing on earth can keep me fixed; but thou O God dost make that nature fixed which yields itself up to thy love. Surely thou hast not made me to live thus for ever as the sport of changeful desires! Nay, thou hast given me a nature incapable of resting upon any creature, because thou wouldst have me fly from all to seek my rest in thee. I thank thee that I cannot rest with satisfaction upon earthly things. Surely if I could, I should never grow up to thy love. The very restlessness of nature drives me to thee. I cannot be satisfied with anything that I gain; for if it be worth gaining, it makes me by its very possession grow to greater desires. As I change, as I grow, as I rise to ever new desires and aims, I know myself to be growing to the need of thee. Oh blessed knowledge, for he that knows his need of thee shall find thee and shall gain thee. What though I could know all things under the sun! My soul would only know the more terribly that this knowledge never could be its proper food and stay. Earthly things are pleasant in the acquiring, for feeding on them the soul grows; but the soul outgrows them all, and grows up to thee. Money, fame, science, calm not any craving of the soul. I would not rest in any created joy, for it holds me back from becoming worthy of thee. I thank thee for changing me by the gifts of thy

grace until I may know thee, the unchangeable, and rest in thy likeness.

3 God alone unchangeable.

DISTINCT from the world, though ruling all creation's change, thy voice, O my God, speaks even to me with an unchangeable power. Nature changes, but thy law, which rules all nature, never changes. The laws of nature are not fixed because nature is fixed; but because thy voice is the one fixed power guiding in constant course what otherwise must perish in the flux of corruptibility. Thou workest unchangeably, because thou art unchangeable. O let me hear thy voice speaking in its own unchangeable glory. Speak to me, not through the changeful forms of the creature, but in the indissoluble glory of thine own pure self. Take me into thyself that I may hear thy voice, yes, hear, and live for ever.

4 The solidity of the objects of faith.

THAT which thou speakest in the ear of faith is indeed truth, for it abideth for ever. Created forms and symbols change. Creation is empty. Truth changes not, for it is solid, indefectible. That which thou revealest in thy kingdom is indeed the true end wherein we may rest. Faith welcomes in thy voice, O God, the vision of the eternal, and we become alive for evermore in the vision which that voice awakens.

5 The necessity of this hope.

WHAT could we be without this voice? Nature could but attest the weary disappointments of the noblest lives. All must confess the supremacy of nothingness unless they be transformed into thee! Men live for this world, but what is the end? Sensualist or philosopher,—both are alike! They live in ignorance, if they live not for thee and know thee not. What if we perceive *that* thou art, yet know thee not *as* thou art! Then must we perish in despair. But oh, to know thee,—this is life eternal! To rest in thy transforming power, that we may come to know thee in thy fulness, this is the joyous hope of the redeemed.[40]

II. 1 All our faculties given to us that we may serve God.

O MY God, thou art hidden from me by reason of that fleshly nature which encompasses me, but thou hast given me this nature that I may draw near to thee thereby. Vain were this life of sense, if by these senses I could only take knowledge of the things of time. No, I believe in the resurrection of the flesh, and though I cannot tell in what way my very flesh shall apprehend thy presence and rejoice in thy manifestation, yet I am sure that in my flesh I shall see thee. Therefore does my flesh remain in hope, even during this nighttime of corruption and sin. I long for the better life, and would keep all my senses apart from the mere indulgence of transitory delight that they may be consecrated

to the reception of thy beatific glory. Now must my body suffer, for it is the body which has brought my soul into trouble. O my God, as much as I may, I would desire to purify myself by taking holy vengeance on this body of flesh. Alas, that I should be so prone to its indulgence, so ignorant of the necessity of having it purified! As the outer man decays, grant that the inner man may be strengthened. Oh, that I could live in the joy of the inner man, then should I delight in all that could destroy the outer.

Incorruptibe body! What will it be to find the glorious energies thereof freed from the flux of blinding, suffocating, paralysing accident! To taste thy sweetness, O my God; to see thy beauty; to perceive thy fragrance; to touch thee and know the transport of joy wherewith thy divine glory shines throughout every faculty of the renovated manhood which thou makest to be thy habitation by the Spirit! To hear thy voice! How can I let earthly delight choke and defile that which has been given me in order that I may rise to rejoice in thyself! Yes, thou hast given me a will, and that will must be disciplined in wisdom. Now, even now, would I choose thee in spite of all. Else how shall I hereafter be able to rejoice in thee as superior to all? By my will I would put aside all earthly satisfaction, for without my will I cannot find my satisfaction in thee. A heaven of compulsion were no heaven at all. My God, I will choose thee, discipline myself for

thee, purify myself for thee, mortify myself for thee, praise thee, love thee, live for thee!

2 The powers of the world, all things good and bad, are given to us as means of attaining to God.

Give me, O God, what thou wilt, for with everything that thou givest I can serve thee; but oh, with everything give me wisdom that I may know how to use it for thy service. Why should I choose the *manner* of my service? I would rather give myself up into thy hands. Do with me what thou wilt!

Everything is valuable only in proportion as it is done for thee, and thou dost value what we do in proportion to the simplicity of our obedience. Sweet is that life in which thy will is felt and known; guiding, urging, restraining. When nature shrinks from anything, the remembrance of thy will can rouse the energies and fill the heart with joy for its acceptance.

The martyrs and confessors were blessed, for their sufferings were ordained of thee, and they rejoiced to accept them from thee. For thee they suffered, they knew that they were thine. How blind are we, to think that if thou givest us wealth, honour, or praise, thou givest us these things for ourselves,—as if thy children could have their reward here. No, that were to forfeit our reward, to fail of our sonship. Thy sons can know no enjoyment but thyself. Here thy very gifts hide thee from our sight, if we rest in them. Oh, nature is so deceived

by worldly power! Thou, O God, needest it not, for thou art the source of all power; and thy sons need it not, for thy power is ever with them as a loving inheritance, that they may do all thy work. But only for thy work do they live, and only in thy life can they do thy work.

Never let me think myself strong because I have earthly goods, nor happy, nor acceptable to thee. Thou art my strength and my joy. With thee will I find acceptance, holding aloof from everything that is not thyself.

3 God is glorified by the struggles of our life, not by its outward results.

So let us rejoice to live, fighting on in the world. Here never shall be my rest. I long for thee our Father, and for thee alone; to suffer, fight, and die for thee, that I may show forth the life of thy true children. Amidst a world of death, thou wilt glorify thyself in me, and glorify me in thyself everlastingly.[40]

III. 1 The joys that are in the world.

O my God, whatever thou mayest give me, I would enjoy not it but thee. Its enjoyment is but for a moment, and my hope is in thee, the Giver of all. Whatever is beautiful before me, death is written upon it. As the flowers of the field, it shall pass away. Man's longest life of enjoyment is but a moment. It is nothingness and vanity. Yet surely

in the beauty of thy perishing gifts I must learn to look forward to thy own true beauty. From all that is round about me, I turn to thee. I would lay all at thy feet, and look upward that I may behold thy face. From whatever created thing brightness may come, that brightness is from thee; and in thy brightness all other brightness fades away. Oh let these things lead me to thee, that I may praise thee for them, and forget them in thee! There is not one of them which may not be surrendered to thee.

These things are as the bright steps of thy throne, I must lose sight of them as I ascend them. Only by treading them under my feet can I rise up to thee. Bright they are, but often oh, how slippery! The eye is dazzled and the foot gives way. Thou must hold me up, else can I not be safe. The very seeming safety is my ruin. By watchful abstinence let me learn holy self-discipline. Constantly let me hold myself back from the joys which blind me, that I may constantly look up to thee; and looking to thee may gain the sight which my soul needs, and find the joy of truth. I were not worthy to possess thy love, unless I would part with all else for it. Not because the world is so unsatisfying would I put it away, but because it cannot compare with thee, and I cannot have it and thee. Nothing that I can bring can ever make me worthy of thee, but that which I shall put away shall show thee that I love thee. Yea, I would grow in thy love by every act of self-discipline whereby I would separate myself

from the world. Only as thy gift would I receive any joys of earth. Only in thy love would I retain them; only for thy glory would I use them; only with the hope of joy in thee could I rejoice in them. In resistance to the world's distractions, let me learn to cling to thee, that in every faculty of my nature I may be conformed to thy will, perfected in thy likeness, stablished in thy grace, purified from every taint and from every impulse,—to live wholly in thee and for thee.

2 The sorrows of the world.

The sorrows of the world, too, these are thy gifts, dear Lord, for thou knowest that I need them. So slow am I to put away earth's joys! Those joys were thy first good gifts, that in the enjoyment of thy creatures we might rise to thy joy. Now that we are fallen, creature-joys intoxicate, stupefy, destroy. Yet we are unwilling to practise self-discipline. It was in love to man that thou didst curse the ground for his sake *(Cf. Gen. 3:17)*. By sorrow we are freed to look and long for another home, and for joys more worthy of ourselves as created in thine image,—for things more worthy of the Giver. By sorrow thou callest us to holiness. Each wound that our nature receives is a fresh capacity for holy joy. Thou healest, fillest, glorifiest.

Alas, I shrink from mortification! Shall I not give myself up to thee that *thou* mayest mortify me? Shall I not rejoice? My will shall welcome that

from which my flesh would shrink. Sweeter than all joys is the discipline of thy cross, O blessed Jesu! Thou didst choose to bear the cross. Shall I not rejoice to bear it? What love of the Father can equal the blessedness of the portion whereby he makes me like to thee? O Man of Sorrows, thou by sorrows dost unite us to thyself. Truly life wastes away in earthly joys, we are unmanned by them. By sorrow's holy discipline we are made more than men in fellowship with thee, the Son of God.

3 All earthly things to be used in the fellowship of God.

With thee, O my God, everything becomes sweet, everything serves unto holiness. Without thee the sweetest things turn to bitterness; and sweetness and bitterness alike are but forms of sin, leading to greater sin, unless thy presence be there to sanctify. Oh then, in everything show me thyself! Let me feel thee near; let me find thee revealed; let me hear thee speaking. In joy, say to me 'Leave not me.' In sorrow say 'Lean on me.' Speak to me, heart to heart, that thou mayest speak to me hereafter face to face. Surely I must rejoice that all things are against me, if thus I am made to feel close with thee. If I have thee, I need nothing more; or if I need anything, I need,—yea I rejoice in:—pain, that thou mayest heal it; sorrow, that thou mayest soothe it; loneliness, that thy companionship may be more manifest; shame before men, that I may have glory from thee untarnished by earthly admixture; weak-

ness, that I may know thy strength; poverty, that I may find all riches and treasures in thee; yes even death, spreading through earthly life and ending it, that I may know thy Spirit of life, sanctifying the things of time, and quickening me to live in thyself and with thyself unto eternity.[40]

33. All Saints

SOLITARY joy is selfishness, enfeebling, degrading. Community of joy is ennobling, strengthening, as it enlarges the individual so as to become identified with the larger sphere of consciousness. So shall the individual find his true, his perfect joy, eternally sanctified in the glory of Christ, not by personal aggrandizement, but by the loss of self in the communion of saints.[8]

No saint in his solitariness shall be taken into communion with God, remaining in his own separateness; our nature is formed for sympathy, we are bound together as members of one another in the glory of Christ. We shall not be absorbed in a selfish delight, but shall know ourselves to be verily of one substance with all those round about us; and we shall rejoice to touch one another with the mysterious contact of the risen life, which makes us to be truly near to those who are far off. There will be no 'far off,' no 'near,' as all find themselves united to one another in the Body of Christ.[32]

God gives 'to every seed its own body' *(1 Cor. 15:38)*. The blossom springs from a special law of life inherent in the roots, and so there are special glories in the resurrection, corresponding with the special graces possessed below. We cannot trace the identity, nor judge of the one from the other. The most uncouth root may have the loveliest bloom. The identity is one of life. The Holy Ghost is the life whereby real grace develops into its proper glory.

The plant does not exist for its own sake, but for the husbandman. So the saints of Christ do not exist merely in order to be happy, but for the glory of God. As the skill of the husbandman is manifested in the culture of the plant, much more is the glory of God manifest in the beauty of the resurrection of his saints. They are made to grow by nourishment that often seems altogether alien from their beauty. So the culture of earth differs far from the blossom of heaven.[1]

It is not what we have done for Jesus which becomes a power in the world when we are gone to be with him, it is what Jesus has done for us,—this is the power which the saints leave behind. There is a mysterious legacy of the life of Jesus which they leave behind, and which, when they are gone, fades not away from the world, but spreads itself in a mighty power of supernatural grace. Let us always remember that it is not those who have done most for Jesus who will leave the most behind; it is those

who have suffered Jesus to do the most for them, it is those who have lived the most hidden in his love, those who have most truly lost all earthly consciousness, those who have acted without knowing, and in their very rest have risen to the highest activity; these are they who really leave behind them,—not a name of their own which men may honour,—but that better Name in which they found their joy, their strength, their refuge, and their life. The Name of Jesus takes the place of the saint whereon it was inscribed. The Name of Jesus lives on, and its mysterious power is felt, even though the vessel which enshrined it is unknown.

The soul that dies in the fulness of the love of God, the soul that is taken into the fulness of the power of God; that soul becomes an instrument of the divine power, through which mighty works shall be wrought in the world.

It is not because man knows much about the life of a saint that the life of that saint is really effective in the ages after it has gone. No, the life of many a one which has been spent in utter obscurity is powerful because that soul has learned its nothingness, and has lived with God. There is many an obscure one who, nevertheless, is the channel of divine grace to the world for ages yet to come. Yes, —how is it with the Apostles, how is it with the blessed Mother of God,—what do we know of the acts of their lives? We only know that they lived in God's love. How few of the acts even of the two

great Apostles, of the Circumcision and of the Uncircumcision *(Cf. Gal. 2:7)*,—how few even of their acts are treasured up; and of the others, how vague are the reminiscences! But they are the foundations whereon the City of God is built, hidden deep in the memory of God. Yes, they are the foundation of the Church of God, hidden from the eye of man, but pouring forth the never-ceasing stream of divine light and holy love whereby the Church is quickened to the end of time.[34]

The world cannot honour a saint while he is living hidden in the glory of the life of God; for the world cannot see him there, nor know what he is doing, nor enter into his interests. It may invent many miracles for him, because it cannot understand the miracle which he is!

Oh, to be detached from the world is to be a living miracle! To be detached from the world, surrounded with the glory and living in the fellowship of God, this is to be a miracle; a miracle which the world cannot know, a miracle far greater than any which the world can invent! It is indeed a miracle of divine love.[35]

God's glory is the honour of the saints. Not what they have done, but what he has done, his victories, are the cause of their exaltation. They seek their honour in glorifying him. Gratitude is one of the noblest principles of human nature, and it is the

ennobling principle of heaven. Each act of divine love that the soul can recognize becomes a fresh vocation, whereby God calls the soul to be bound to himself in the conscious participation of his glory.[1]

34.

The Continuous Revelation of the Holy Spirit

BEFORE the glorification of Christ, the Spirit might operate upon the world of creation from without; but all creation was, so to speak, hollow, empty, even the highest of the heavenly host. Now that created nature has been exalted to the right hand of God; the Spirit dwelling in that nature, by reason of his procession from the eternal Son, flows forth not merely *upon* the creatures, but *into* the depth of the nature of such as are regenerated in him. Christ's glorified humanity, underlying their natural human nature, fills the hollowness of their created superficiality with its solid imperishable glory.[8]

The Lord Jesus did not issue an entirely new commission to his disciples, so that they should go forth to the world bearing a delegated authority derived from, but separate from himself. He sends them forth into the world by taking them up into the very participation of that original commission which he had received. That commission lives on in them, as the life which is in the head regulates the

actions of the hand, not by mechanical impact but by vital energy.

The Holy Ghost is the living power by which Jesus came, and he sends forth his Church replenished with the same life. The Church is not merely in substance the Body of Christ, but is one with him in the power of the Spirit. She lives with his life.[11]

We are too apt to talk of 'winning,' instead of going forth to *claim* what Christ has won. The kingdom of Christ is to exert its power not as hoping for victory, but with triumph already assured. However Satan may still tyrannize, 'the kingdoms of this world are become,' even now, 'the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ' *(Rev. 11:15)*.[11]

The continuous work of illumination will never cease. The revelation of God to man can never be a matter of the past. Unless it be going forward with an ever-present life, it must lose its truth. It is only as a power that God can be known, and we cannot know a power by reading about it, we can only know it by experiencing it. The teaching of the Holy Ghost is a power which comes to us from Christ. When he ascended up on high, he received gifts for men, and gave a ministry to his Church which should act in the power of the Holy Ghost. So we do not speak of the Holy Ghost as having simply come down once for all from heaven; we pray to him continually, 'Come, Holy Ghost.'

The teaching of the Holy Ghost will be one and the same throughout, although expanding with the needs of successive generations. He teaches the quickened soul to know God, by shedding abroad the love of God in the heart *(Cf. Rom. 5:5)*. The soul comes to the knowledge of God by becoming identified with God. It is the unceasing work of the great Mediator thus to make God known by the gift of his Holy Spirit.[8]

Think how the Holy Spirit ever since our baptism has never for one moment withdrawn his presence from us. We have grieved him when we sinned, but he has continued with us; we have often been leaving him, he did not leave us. Whatever we have been doing, he has been content to be associated with us. Whatever we have been saying, he has listened. While we have uttered thoughts suggested by other spirits, grieving him, he has dwelt in our hearts, content to wait. Manifold other lords may have had dominion over our hearts, various objects have carried us away in disloyalty to him; but he never resigned the sovereignty of our heart, he still claims it as his own. How difficult it is to realize this claim, even in moments of devotion! We may realize the fact at such moments, but how much more difficult it is to realize that all our life long he has been bearing the same relation to us.[36]

In the midst of our miserable carnal passions, the

blessed Spirit dwelling in the Body of Christ will not leave us. He chooses to remain with us, so that his power may be with us to restrain those passions if only we will allow him to do so. He is with us in the midst of all our wild undisciplined appetites. He is with us to strengthen us to resist. But while he is with us, he does not sanctify us against our will. Yet he does every thing he can to move our will, to illuminate our will, to strengthen our will, to direct our will, and to provide us with all the instruments of action, so that we may really rise up to the life of God in the flesh.[34]

Think of the Holy Ghost dwelling within us, mindful of all our past sins. But his memory of our sins is not censorious. It is not that he would reproach us, as weak mean-spirited persons regard someone who has strayed, eager to accuse while thinking to make escape impossible. The memory of the Holy Ghost is the memory of magnanimous love. He remembers our past sin most truly, but only because he desires to deliver us from it. He would teach us to remember it, he would bring us to the same remembrance as his, but only to effect our deliverance. Until we remember, he cannot deliver us; until we remember, we cannot attain to his deliverance. He desires that all this work of sin may be done away, that all these full powers of his love may stream forth on our soul, and that he may 'see of the travail' of his divine purpose 'and be satisfied'

(Cf. Is. 53:11), as we are formed anew and perfected in the very image of Christ.[36]

It is by the blessed Spirit's power that we are able to feed upon Christ in Holy Communion. Had the Holy Spirit not been dwelling in us, we might have received the outer forms of bread and wine, and yet we could not have been partakers of the Body and Blood of Christ. It is the Spirit of Christ who gives us the Body and Blood of Christ. Unless we had the life of Christ already within us, we could not partake of this supernatural food. The Holy Spirit dwelling in us communicates to us the aliment whereby our nature might be delivered from its natural corruption, 'our sinful bodies made clean by his body, and our souls washed through his most precious blood' *(B.C.P.)*. As we drink the blood of Christ, the blessed Spirit gives himself to us in increasing measure, for 'the life is in the blood' *(Cf. Lev. 17:11)*. Thus we are made to drink into the Spirit of Christ *(Cf. 1 Cor. 12:13)* when we receive the blood of Christ. And as we receive our communion, the blessed Spirit gives us our resurrection body, and he gives us fresh impulses of his own personal presence; he lays hold of us with a firmer grasp, seeking to enable us with new power to live unto God. As we come to Holy Communion, the blessed Spirit thus ministers to us the things of Christ, and yet how little we think of him! Time after time we have come, and the blessed Spirit was

never wanting to us; time after time, and we have had no thought of him.[36]

35. Church Unity

THE Word created all things *(Cf. Col. 1:16)*. The one Word, becoming incarnate, embodied in himself all perfection. The individual members of his Body have each of them their own perfection, but none can have all perfections. In the original creation, all things were separately blessed as being very good *(Cf. Gen. 1:31)*, but the goodness of each was individual, not universal. So in heaven hereafter, the members of Christ differ from one another as each represents some perfection which is derived from Christ, but *all* perfections are to be found only in him.

All are derived from him, and his Church cannot be complete until every perfection that is found in him has found its manifestation in some one or other of his members. All the grace that is in him must become operative in one or another of his members, so that the Church, his Body and Bride, shall at length be the true representative of her Lord, possessing nothing which does not come from him, and lacking nothing which is to be found in him. 'Of his fulness have all we received' *(John 1:16)*. The Church is 'the fulness of him that filleth all in all' *(Eph. 1:23)*. No multitude of individual saints that reproduced exactly the virtues of any of the

greatest of saints could make up the number of God's elect. That number has to be completed, not merely by multiplication, but by differentiation. A human body requires not only hands, but feet and eyes and other members *(Cf. 1 Cor. 12:12ff)*.

So in the body of Christ, we have each our special function, and that function is itself diversified according to the purpose of our creation; and whatever be our individual vocation, our work must be the outcome of the mind and will of Christ acting through us. He is both the head and heart of the Body, being both God and man. We can, then, none of us do the work which Christ assigns to anyone else. We must none of us complain that we have not the special gifts of the saints. We are not required to duplicate them as individuals, but to work along with them, as they worked for the accomplishment of the mind of Christ; as being ourselves, equally with the greatest of the saints, instinct with the life of Christ. They without us, and we without them, could not be made perfect *(Cf. Heb. 11:40)*.[15]

We, as members of the human race, are not so many individuals existing alongside of one another in the world, but by nature we are one; and we cannot be restored to the love of God merely as individuals. We must be restored in the consciousness of that unity to which we belong. We are not taken out of one body to be individuals in heaven.

The law of sympathy is a law which lives on with us, and without it we cannot be saved. We cannot truly have a personal interest in Christ, unless we have a collective interest in Christ. We cannot have our sins blotted out by Christ's blood, unless we have fellowship one with another *(1 John 1:7)*. This law of unity is the law under which we are created, and we must accept it as the foundation of our moral state. We must then have a real sense of our own participation in the sins of the whole race. And we must humble ourselves before God.[34]

The Holy Ghost binds us within the unity of the divine life, and so he binds us all in absolute indissoluble unity one with another. This is the principle in which we confess: 'I believe in the Holy Ghost,' and 'I believe one Catholic and Apostolic Church.' There is one Church because one Spirit personally dwells in every one of its members. The same Spirit dwells in all; and their union is not the result of faith, it is not a union of place, or of government, or of action; but it is the unity of life. It is not that we all receive the likeness of one spiritual being when we are regenerated which unites us, but that we are 'made to drink into one Spirit' *(1 Cor. 12:13)*, and so are made to be one Body.

Each soul is made to drink into the one Spirit. One and undivided he dwells in each, and without multiplication in all. Each regenerate soul is made to be the temple of the undivided Spirit of God *(1*

Cor. 3:16). The whole Being of the eternal Father proceeds in the procession of the Holy Ghost. Nothing remains behind; in that one eternal Act, his whole Being is poured forth. So it is that the one Spirit coming forth takes up each one of us to dwell in the Son of God. It is one single act of union; one Spirit dwells in each and all, and this one act constitutes the one Church. 'There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit' *(1 Cor. 12:4).*

It is only as the Church rises up to the consciousness of the Holy Ghost within her that she can assert her divine powers. The divine power of the Church rests solely on this unity in the Holy Ghost. No desolations of the Church by the ravages of unbelief can destroy the power of the Holy Spirit within her, which is her unity. He is still omnipotent, even if her numbers dwindle to a handful. Even if there were only one or two straggling souls of the faithful left on earth at the last day, yet in them would dwell the Spirit of God with the omnipotence of God. No human accidents of the Church's life can add to her strength, though the almighty Spirit may use them as instruments whereby the glory of God shall shine forth.

This is no unpractical reflection. The Holy Ghost as really and truly dwells in us who are members of the Body of Christ, binding us in the unity of the divine life, as he dwells in the Father and the Son, the bond of the eternal unity of the Trinity. The Church has sadly lost power because she has sought

to maintain her power by means of exterior organizations instead of realizing that she is the living organism of the Spirit of God. By these organizations she would seek to maintain unity, instead of resting in the unity of the one Spirit. At length, as these are shattered and pass away, the glory of the undivided Spirit shall appear.[36]

The Spirit would be a bond of unity among the Apostles, for they were not sent forth with separate commissions. Their united commission represented the personal commission of Christ their head. The full powers of this commission could not, therefore, be exercised save by the complete apostolic body acting as one.

Hence we may see the grievous sacrilege which the disunion of Christendom presents. The Church does not depend for unity upon the outward union; but the powers of the unity cannot be exercised save by all acting in concert.

Those acts which the Church performs by common agreement retain their divine power in spite of the disunion which exists between various branches of the Church; but if the Church were acting thoroughly in unity, what vast powers of divine life would spring up into exercise! We are not to be surprised that the action of the Church is feeble, when that unity of action is wanting which is the very condition of her commissioned authority. Rather must we wonder, and thankfully give praise, that she is

permitted to accomplish as much in the world as we see her doing. The action of the Holy Ghost cannot be complete in the individual, unless it be complete in the Church; all the members of the undivided apostolate being partakers of the same commission, as all the faithful also are baptized into one Spirit.[8]

No multitudinous extension of Christendom can ever avail to restore the spiritual power of the Church, no reorganization can ever put the machinery of the Church in working order, no moral improvement can ever sharpen the edge of the spiritual sword; unless Christendom wakes up once more to the glow of this supernatural consciousness of her inherent life.[14]

The Church is not a society favoured by certain external tokens of divine approval. On the contrary, she has to approve herself as bearing the ministry of God, 'in much patience, in afflictions' *(2 Cor. 6:4)*. Outward success, unless it be won by hard fight, is of itself an evidence of earthliness, which the Church has to disprove. It is the capacity of enduring the cross which is the real evidence of the life of the Crucified. This is one and the same in every age. Thus it is that the unity of the Spirit of divine love is manifested.[8]

We cannot worship God as separate from others, it must be in the communion of saints. Every act of

worship must be felt as an act of joy in the thought of the paradise of God. We and they are united in one common consciousness of the central glory of Jesus our God. We must come before God with this consciousness. 'Therefore with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious Name' *(B.C.P.)*. Let us feel, even though we pray in solitude, that yet we are in the midst of this great multitude; and the voice of prayer is not the mere dying breath of the natural frame, but the breathing from the inmost heart of the breath of the Holy Ghost in which the blessed live, which articulates their words which otherwise could not rise up to the Father.[32]

The Church of God, the kingdom of heaven upon earth, is the beginning of that glorious kingdom wherein all energies shall abide, perfected by earthly discipline and operating eternally without weariness. The kingdom of glory is not a state into which we are translated from earthly obedience, but a development of earthly obedience; capable henceforth of acting more efficiently because the trammels of earthly discipline hold it down no longer. The life, the love, is the same; the voice of him who calls is the same; the heart of him that obeys is the same; the glory of God, which is the end of all, sought out in time and attained in eternity, is the same.

But there is no longer any earthly self to die to. No longer is there any distraction to interfere with

love. The voice of the Beloved speaks and rings through the purified frame, and there is nothing to jar upon it. The heart receives the utterance with an ear perfectly trained to the perception of the loving voice. The eye is opened to the vision of God, and the mysteries which faith recognized are seen in the fulness of eternal truth.

The actions of earth are thus expanded into the energy of heaven. Here, doing follows hearing, and very feebly at the best. There, hearing and doing shall be one, the glorious fruition of divine love in the Body of Christ, and the power of the Holy Ghost.[15]

May the blessed Spirit make his glorious presence more and more manifest throughout the Church, enabling us increasingly to realize that unity wherein he makes us all one, in spite of those manifold divisions which seem to break up the Body of Christ into so many parts! It is a joy to feel his presence binding us even with many that persist, as far as human antagonism can go, in holding aloof from us. Oh, how great is the joy to feel that his presence makes us one so sympathizingly, so perfectly, with those who though separated from us by outward circumstances, are really looking to his guidance, hearing his voice, rejoicing in his love, acting in his power.[19]

36. The Universal Humanity of Christ

IT is not an uncommon thing to hear Christianity spoken of as if it were an Eastern Religion, as if it bore the traces of our Lord's Jewish origin. But our Lord, although descended from Jewish progenitors, was not limited solely by Jewish characteristics. Although salvation was to be of the Jews through One who was born amongst them *(Cf. John 4:22)*, yet we must not limit our Lord's being as if he belonged to that nationality alone,—he belongs as truly to one nation as to another.

We must remember that national character does not mean development of human personality by endowments over and above what would be possessed by those of other nations. No one can become more than man by any national development. Each national development is rather the *loss* of some special power; the shrinking up of the nation within the limits of an imperfect manhood, by which means some idiosyncracy is brought into prominence, whereas it would have been held in check by a more complete development of the whole human character. Nations may be superior one to another in proportion as the elements which one of them loses may be of less value than those which another loses. Whoever loses least remains supreme. But each nationality is formed by some *loss*; and no development in another direction can take the place of what is lost, nor can it effect any endowment of nature

over and above what was contained germinally in the original man.

Had it not been for the wound of original sin, whereby the unifying life of God was lost, mankind would have remained in absolute unity. ... All the antagonisms of interest, nationality, and every other distinction, would have been avoided. ... Mankind would have been bound together in one spirit of love.

This unity was broken up into individualities, and cannot be restored until Christ ... has gathered together all the faithful in the full power of his own Resurrection. ... The multitudes broken off from one another by natural birth must be consolidated in the spiritual unity of Christ's Body by a supernatural birth.

Although, therefore, our Lord was born amidst the relationships of earth in his life of humiliation, he took upon himself the common humanity of all nations. There was nothing in him to limit his character, or his affections, or his interests. He is the Son of Man. The whole human race claim him as their offspring. He is the Seed of the collective humanity, — the Seed of the Woman *(Cf. Gen. 3:15)*, ... conceived by the Holy Ghost ... in the womb of the blessed Virgin, the Mother of God.

His personality is the personality of the Son of God. The substance of his assumed nature is the substance of the universal Humanity, living with the divine life of the anointing Spirit; and by that power capable of gathering all nations of the world

into the indissoluble unity and life of his own divine Headship.

And as he has thus within himself the humanity from which all the nations of the earth have been derived, so must he gather unto himself a Church from amongst all nations of the world. The Church of Christ must be Catholic, as his Humanity is One. The Mystical Body must correspond with his natural body in the world-wide completeness of its comprehensiveness. Christ's Virgin-Birth makes his humanity Catholic in power. There is nothing in any race of men which he does not share as the Son of Man. His Virgin-Birth makes his humanity no less Catholic in its demand. It cannot be satisfied until it has absorbed into itself every element of human nature wherever it may be found. As each nationality is formed by the *loss* of some element essential to the perfect nature of the individual man; so also each nationality *contains* some element essential to the perfect nature of man, — and therefore essential to the perfect exhibition of the mystical Christ.

The humanity which Christ bears cannot act in its fulness until the disintegrated humanity shall be restored by being gathered up into his headship as the principle of divine life to each and all. It would be impossible to have a heaven made up only of Anglo-Saxons, or French, or Hindoos, or Chinese; or even out of the majority of the nations of the world. The most savage and degraded nations have

some element of human nature which makes them what they are. They are not only capable of being restored in Christ, but their restoration is essential to the integrity of Christ's glorified Humanity.

This is, in truth, the great motive of Christian Missions. ... We must look for the dark races of Africa to shine with the glory of the divine countenance. India must wake up from her dreams to worship the personality of the Incarnate God. China must go forward to the hope of heaven. ... The dwarfs of Equatorial Africa, and the cannibals in islands of the sea have their individualizing inheritance; and the Blood of Christ cannot assert the fulness of its redemptive power until it has made manifest in them that specialty of renewing grace whereby they may claim their part in the inheritance of the saints, as members of himself, the Second Adam.[13]

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